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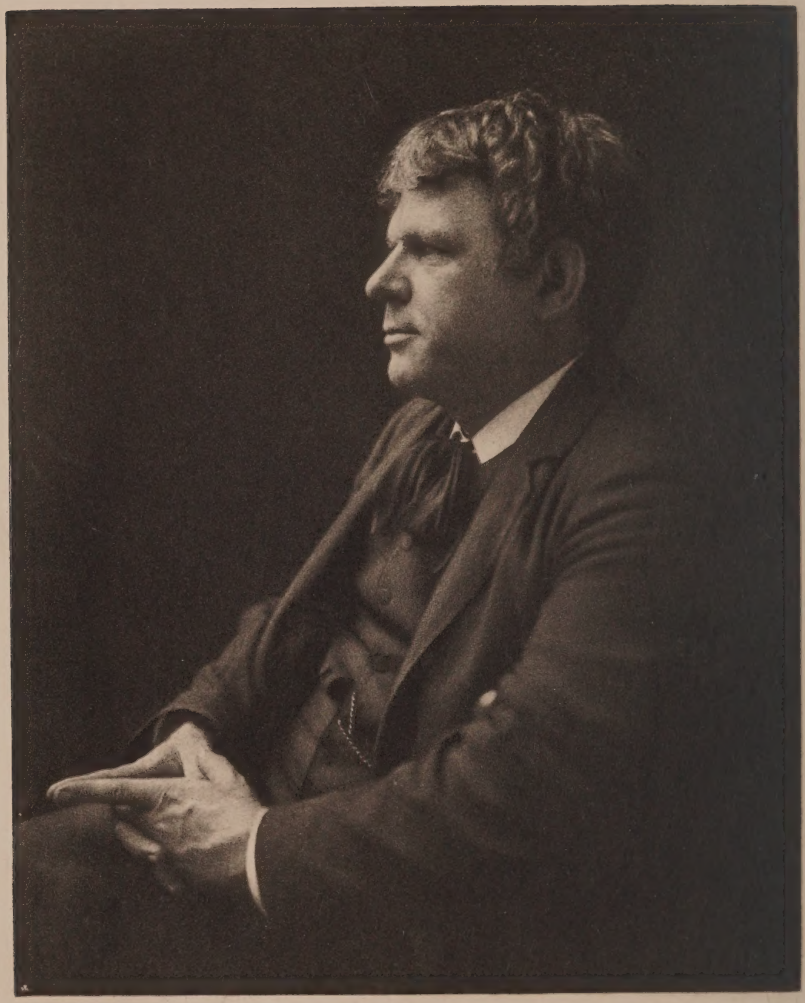
DEWITT MILLER



DEWITT MILLER

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

BY

LEON H. VINCENT

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JOHN IRVIN CASSEDY

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I

This biographical sketch has been written with a particular audience in mind, an audience wholly made up of people who knew Dewitt Miller and liked him. It is designedly personal and anecdotal, and will be best read in the spirit in which one would read a letter. Doubtless the letter is too long drawn out, but it was not possible with the material at command to make it brief. Only by rigid compression has it been brought within the present limits.

The facts concerning Miller's boyhood and school-days have been mostly supplied by his sister, Mrs. Webb, and by Doctor King, his former principal at Fort Edward Institute. A scrap-book filled with newspaper clippings, some of them very amusing, throws plenty of light on the period between 1876 and 1885. A few notes, made at the time the half-veiled

portrait of Miller as 'The Bibliotaph' was sketched, have been drawn on. For all else the writer has depended on his memory, and cannot be grateful enough to the friends who have jogged that memory from time to time.

This remarkable collector of books was the only son of Jahu and Phebe (Seymour) Miller, of Westchester County, New York. His father was a farmer, and had been at one time a blacksmith. Miller was born on March 1, 1857, at the little village of Cross River, four and a half miles from Katonah, and was christened Jahu Dewitt.

The first of his two given names often struck people as being exceedingly odd. They could understand how a man might be called J*e*hu but J*a*hu passed their comprehension. Miller's signature was as legible as are most signatures, but hotel-clerks and telegraph-operators insisted on writing him down as 'John.' He figures as John Dewitt Miller in at least one edition of *Who's Who in America*. Convinced

finally that there was no hope of teaching a certain part of the public (a part with whom he was in daily touch) to master so simple yet so unusual a name, and acting on the advice of a friend, he began to sign himself Dewitt Miller. After that the occasions were rare on which he found his name misprinted.

But to his intimates, and to some who were not, he was never known by any other name than Jahu. If through inadvertence we called him Dewitt to his face, he always gave an ironical 'Ha! Ha!' which meant that, while he did not consider himself to be putting on airs in signing himself thus, we were in not using the old-fashioned name that we knew he preferred.

Like other country boys he went to the district school, and in 1871, at the age of fourteen and a half, entered the Collegiate Institute at Fort Edward, New York, was graduated in the college preparatory course and became at once a member of the faculty. One of his note-

books shows that he taught classes in arithmetic, test spelling, grammar, beginners' Latin, Cicero, logic, and English literature; in other words, and as a famous humorist said of his own pedagogical experience, he held not a 'chair' but a 'settee.' He also acted as librarian and was reputed to have devoured the contents of the school-collection. Knowing his skill in getting at the heart of any book that struck his fancy, one can understand how the remark might be in a sense perfectly true.

Doctor King describes Miller at the age of seventeen as 'a broad-shouldered youth, his 'big head covered with abundant coarse brown 'hair, which reminded one of the portraits of 'Andrew Jackson.' He also speaks of the 'grimy white overcoat' which the young man affected, a garment much too big for him and which he doubtless wore as the outward symbol of an unswerving loyalty to the New York journalist he most admired. At what time the

white beaver hat was added to his wardrobe is not known.

It is probable that he was active in debating societies at Fort Edward, and conspicuous for his skill and force in declamation. He had even then a vocabulary which always astonished and often diverted those who heard him speak. He began to correspond for newspapers, and sometimes embroiled himself in disputes with editors and others, being a positive and somewhat contentious young gentleman, much addicted to emphatic language.

His first lecture was given 'at a Grange pic-'nic at Peach Lake, in the summer of 1874.' It was 'a great success.' One never thinks of an audience of farmers and their wives as the easiest in the world to hold, and that Miller could hold them at the tender age of seventeen is, perhaps, a fact worth noting. About the same time he preached his first sermon in the little Methodist Church at Cross River, and was looking on the ministry as his vocation.

It is not difficult to see how this came about. Brought up in a denomination which insists on having ministers who can speak fluently and forcibly, a youth with the oratorical gift might conclude with perfect sincerity that he had in addition to this all other important gifts.

At one time in his life he inclined strongly towards journalism. Horace Greeley was one of his idols. There is a story (probably apocryphal) that when a mere boy he accompanied Greeley on one of his shorter lecturing tours for the honor of carrying the great man's valise. He certainly did a great deal of newspaper work after leaving Fort Edward, but always as a free lance. To the weeklies he contributed such papers as 'A Day at Concord,' published in the 'Christian Union,' and his 'Reminis-'cences of William Cullen Bryant' which appeared in the 'Independent.' He led rather an unsettled existence for three or four years, as an occasional lecturer, a stump-speaker, a journalist, and even a man of business; he

would sometimes describe with much humor his brief career as a shipping-clerk with a large mercantile house in New York City. That he ever caused his parents real anxiety no one who knew Miller can believe; that at this period of his history he kept them in a state of chronic astonishment no one who knew him can doubt.

In the fall of 1880 he went back to school work. An early lecture-list describes him as 'Professor of History and Mental Philosophy' at Pennington Seminary, Pennington, New Jersey; at the bottom of the circular are the words 'terms liberal.' He was drifting little by little towards the mode of life for which his wayward genius best fitted him, and he had already discovered that one must get one's wares before the public somehow, by means of liberal terms if it could be done in no other way. Many articles, relating for the most part to school happenings, were contributed by him to Trenton newspapers, and all carefully written. He acted as librarian at the Seminary,

and his taste is distinctly shown in the list of magazines and journals that were provided for the reading-room.

For some months he preached in the Warren Street Church in Trenton, and packed the little building to the doors with listeners eager to hear him on any topic, and especially curious about his sermons on the amusement question. His un-Methodistical attitude might well have created an excitement. Not a few hard names were hurled at him. People also wrote to the newspapers attacking him on account of the style of his garments. Even if these critics were displeased with many features of his dress they might at least have been placated to some little extent by the sumptuous black velvet waistcoat of clerical cut in which he appears in one of his photographs. It was Miller's fate always to keep his little world in a state of unrest because he did not 'dress like other men.' He could not have been a conformist even had he been so minded.

His name appears among the list of Trenton ministers who were invited to open the sessions of the State Legislature with prayer. At an election in November, 1882, he served hot coffee to the voters of one precinct, but not in person. His placard commending the drink as a substitute for what is commonly drunk on election days, was characteristic. 'You won't 'have to be taken home by a policeman, and 'won't be ashamed to see your wife,' is a typical sentence. Miller paid for five hundred cups of coffee that day, and a proportionate amount of 'good rich cream.' Voters from neighboring precincts found it convenient to visit his stand.

From Trenton he went to Saint James's Methodist Episcopal Church, New Brunswick, and thence, for about one year, to the Emmanuel Reformed Episcopal Church in Kensington, Philadelphia. By that time (the spring of 1885) the demand for his lectures had become so marked as to justify him in leaving the pul-

pit for the platform. He did well to make the change, and to make it before he had grown inured to what is commonly called a 'regular' mode of life. Now he could exhort the public in his own way, on his own themes, and without giving offence. It was once said of him that he always lectured when he preached, and preached when he lectured. The characterization is not entirely amiss.

He gave his business to a bureau called the 'Bryant Literary Union,' probably at the instance of his friend Mr. Wallace Bruce, whom one remembers as sounding Miller's praises in the most cordial fashion. He was under the Slayton management for a while, and for many years with the Reverend S. B. Hershey and his coadjutors, Mr. Stout and Mr. Pelham. One heard of him at Teachers' Institutes and elsewhere, and met him at the various Chautauqua assemblies throughout the Middle West. Many tales circulated among the fraternity concerning his oddities of dress and manner,

his wit, his inimitable story-telling, his unquenchable spirits, and his generous ways.

When asked whether he lived in Philadelphia, Miller would reply, 'I live there as much as I live anywhere.' His ménage was extremely simple, consisting as it did of a membership in the Union League Club, a lock-box at the post-office with some one to look after the contents, and a cedar-chest at his tailor's. He became a member of 'The Players,' in New York, in 1892, and the few who knew him there also knew how devoted he was to the interests of that attractive club. Some other affiliations he had, but they were with book-publishing clubs, bibliographical societies, and the like.

His library — with the exception of so much of it as had accompanied him in his progress from Pennington to Philadelphia — was at the farm-house at Cross River. After his mother's death the books journeyed to Carmel, in Putnam County, where a country store was hired for their accommodation and the door-key

handed over to his sister. With his library sixty miles north of New York, his wardrobe in Philadelphia, and himself in the West, Miller might have described himself as being widely scattered. He felt no inconvenience and would have started at an hour's notice for New Zealand or Australia. He often talked of a lecture-tour in those countries and the wonder is that he did not go, so strong was his lust of travel. In a word, he rejoiced in his freedom, was stimulated by the audiences that he faced nightly, and found his speeches growing better and better with every repetition.

II

He gave what are called 'popular lectures.' They were entitled 'The Uses of Ugliness,' 'The Stranger at Our Gates,' 'Our Country's 'Possibilities and Perils,' 'The Self-Sufficiency 'of the Republic,' and 'The Reveries of a 'Bachelor.' The last of the five is the one that formerly went under the name of 'Love, Court- 'ship, and Marriage,' and a very amusing discourse it was, call it how he would. He had other speeches besides these, but his reputation as a lecturer mainly rests on the group of five, all characteristic examples of his art.

There are lectures (on a variety of topics) which are popular, and there are also 'popular lectures.' Bureau-managers and committees attach a particular meaning to the latter phrase; it means a lecture of a distinct sort.

One would not wish to be understood as speaking lightly of the 'popular lecture.' It has

many and great virtues. The ingenuity often shown in its construction and the surprising effectiveness of the delivery are wholly admirable. But one may be allowed to note the strong family resemblance that obtains among these discourses, various as are their titles and their substance. Every 'popular lecture' is first cousin to every other 'popular lecture.'

These addresses abound in anecdote and flights of rhetoric. They always contain a mixture of the pathetic and the humorous, with bold and unexpected transitions from the one to the other. Always intensely patriotic in tone, not to say jingoish, their effect is to bring home with irresistible force to the hearer — who may have forgotten it for the moment — the great truth that he is indeed a citizen of a great country; he thanks Heaven that he was born an American, and his heart overflows with sympathy for dwellers in benighted regions of the earth like England, France, and Germany. A strong appeal is made to the audi-

ence on the side of the domestic affections, more or less in the style of Mr. Barnes Newcome, and there still remain parts of the United States where it is quite safe for the lecturer to announce that woman's true sphere is in the home.

When theological matters are touched on there is a not too pronounced leaning towards old-fashioned orthodoxy. The speaker believes in temperance, the flag, the public schools, freedom of the press, and freedom of the ballot. There are also many things in which he does *not* believe. He is opposed, for instance, to allowing American girls to marry foreign noblemen. His hearers are with him on this vital question. That dukes, marquises, and viscounts should come over here in droves every spring to carry off our daughters — and that they do so is notorious — is an evil under the sun; the mere thought of it is not to be patiently borne by any self-respecting lyceum audience in the country.

Unjustly superficial as is the above description of the 'popular lecture,' it is correct in that it indicates a few of the points which an exhaustive analysis would be certain to bring out. One has long since learned not to look for originality in the substance of these discourses, but to enjoy the men who give the lectures, and to admire in particular their mastery of the art of speaking.

Miller was one of the best of his tribe, but he never pretended to be an original thinker. He would have laughed at the misguided friend who should attempt seriously to make him out anything of the sort. He was an original man, a character, and could not utter a commonplace in a commonplace way. And that he was also a born orator admits of no question. It was a pleasure to him to face an audience. He spoke easily and well, and his thought always took the oratorical rather than the literary form. He liked to make use of antithesis, to invent daring figures of speech, to

indulge in broad and humorous exaggeration, to pile up cloud-capped towers of brilliant imagery.

His work never became stale and mechanical. A lecture might be given two hundred times and not be given twice alike. The frame-work remained unchanged and many anecdotes persisted, all else was in a state of continual fluctuation. No man lived more intensely in the Present than did he, and his oldest speeches showed that he was perfectly cognizant of what had happened in the round world within the last twenty-four hours. There were times when he created the illusion of having prepared the lecture for the particular audience he saw before him.

He disliked to make new lectures. With him as with many men the making of a lecture was a deliberate process, one that took time, as well as brains; the successful speech cannot be tossed off in an afternoon. And having raised a crop of six or seven effective speeches Miller

was content with the fruits of his husbandry, and made no further effort.

For years he had in mind the preparing of a course on the great American orators. He collected a vast amount of material pertinent to the subject, so much in fact that he was rather appalled when he contemplated it in bulk. 'I 'shall write the lectures out in full,' he said, 'and read them at first.' We who knew him well doubted his ability to solve the problem by that method. All his speeches were outlined and elaborated in his head, without once putting pen to paper. He would have been ill at ease with a manuscript before him.

Though no grain of vanity entered into his composition he was self-possessed in the highest degree when he faced an audience. One cannot think of him as embarrassed or disconcerted. All his powers were always at his command. He would have made an admirable debater.

His readiness to turn to good account the

petty annoyances that befall a public speaker was proverbial. Unless this illustration of Miller's wit be confounded in my memory with a similar one it was about as follows: He was lecturing in a small town in Michigan. As he made some violent movement of the body a button burst from his waistcoat, flew to the edge of the platform, and bounding off described another curve to the floor. The light-minded who saw the button go laughed out, as the light-minded, and some who are not, always will. Miller instantly begged the people on the front benches not to be alarmed, as there was 'no danger whatever of further disintegration.' The effect of the remark being to make them laugh yet more, and with reason, he added pleasantly that he was 'gratified to find that if he could not entertain them in one way he certainly could in another.'

Among the best of his gifts was his voice. It was strong, rich, and flexible. He often misused it, and was sure to do so when he became

impassioned. If criticised for this he would say good-humoredly, 'Well, I made them hear at any rate.' And so he did. Many a time have I heard him bellow as if he were trying to reach the farmers in the next county.

He had an expressive mouth, and when his face was in repose the mouth was one of its most attractive features. Let him, however, become markedly earnest in speech and he would straightway begin to twist his lips into wonderful shapes. Whoever has heard him speak will recall his way of drawing the mouth up at one side and apparently speaking from that side. He gave his friends no little pleasure by stoutly denying that he did such a thing.

Having made no study of the art of stage-presence he held himself as he would, and waved his arms in the way that Nature taught him. No one was better aware of his oddities than himself. Once when he was speaking in a tent on an extremely hot day, and his manner of flapping the air caused some little merri-

ment, he convulsed the audience by exclaiming, 'Some of my gestures are for emphasis, and some for flies.'

Many people addressed him as 'Doctor,' in our easy American fashion, though he held no academic degree of any sort. At the South he was often announced as the Honorable Dewitt Miller, LL.D. Much as he disliked this sort of thing he wasted no time in fretting over it; he knew the slip-shod habits of his fellow-countrymen, and their serene indifference to the truth (North and South alike) when advertising was in question.

Let them call him Doctor or Professor, or what they would, he was outwardly as indifferent to these appellations as a Newfoundland dog might have been. In private he gave vent to his real feelings through a series of ingenious and ironical comments. Few placards tickled him more than the one in which he was heralded to an admiring Western audience as 'Author, Philosopher, and Biblio*path*.'

Against the use of one advertising phrase he always protested — he had an aversion to being called a humorous lecturer. 'They put me at a great disadvantage by that sort of announcement,' he would say. 'I am not a humorous lecturer. Things present themselves to me in a certain light. I state them as I see them. For some reason or other people laugh. But — I — am — not — a — humorous — lecturer!'

His entire freedom from the instinct for self-advertising did not prevent his enjoying privately manifestations of the instinct in others. He sought long and diligently for copies of a circular, on the front page of which was displayed a large picture of the gentleman whose wares were thus presented to the public, and around it *little* pictures of the world's greatest orators. And when, walking on a station-platform, he caught sight of a trunk belonging to one of his colleagues, with the lecturer's name on it in big white letters, and LL.D. after the

name, in letters equally big and white, Miller's face with its varying expressions was indeed a study; he said nothing, merely looked more good things than he could possibly have uttered.

He was not often seen at the performances of his brother lecturers, believing in self-denial with respect to strong mental pleasures. He would go once, sometimes twice, rarely oftener. 'As much as may be ought we to be spared the fearful joy of hearing one another,' he would say.

Seeing him buy a ticket for an entertainment to be given by one of his intimates I said, wonderingly, 'Do you *pay* him for the privilege?'

To which Miller replied, 'I pay him if I go — the first time; *he* pays me if I go the second.'

Having heard all the best men in his profession, and not a few of the worst, and being possessed of excellent judgment in these matters, he was able to show wherein lay the secret of a

success, and what was the cause of a comparative failure. No one gave praise, where praise was due, in a franker spirit, but he preferred to speak well of a man behind his back.

What were Miller's earnings by his lectures it were difficult to say; I doubt whether he knew himself. They should have been quite enough for his way of life. His fees were not of the largest, and he was undoubtedly worth more, as a lyceum 'attraction,' than he commonly received. To him attaches in part the blame for any disappointment he may have felt; from the very beginning he underestimated the commercial value of his work.

It is safe to say that he enjoyed every feature of his life. The long railway rides were never wearisome to him nor the hotels odious. He was always imperturbable and good-humored. It was a barren town that did not afford some diversion in the way of book-hunting, and he had the gift of making friends wherever he went. He lectured with zest, hurried back to

his room to change his clothes (he was always dripping with perspiration after an hour-and-a-half's speech), and was then ready for supper and a talk until two o'clock in the morning.

III

Because of his striking appearance he awakened no little curiosity as he went from place to place. He was often taken for a clergyman, as indeed he was, sometimes for a country doctor, not infrequently for a politician. Men have approached him, smiling, with an air of certainty in the tone with which they put the query of 'Doctor Talmage, I believe?' More than once he was addressed as the habitual Democratic presidential candidate, whom, by the way, he did not in the least resemble.

There was that in his face and bearing which gave the impression of his being a man accustomed to sit in legislative halls, and to talk learnedly on reciprocity and the tariff. I have seen people point him out to one another and stare after him as he ambled along F Street, in Washington. They were sure that he must

that moment have come from the Capitol, and be now on his way home to meditate great speeches for the salvation (or the ruin) of the country. They would have been disappointed to learn that he was just in from the suburbs, and was hurrying to Lowdermilk's book-store on no more serious errand than the buying of a first edition of Beckford's *Vathek*.

We liked to address him now and then as Senator Sorghum, and inquire respectfully as to the state of political feeling 'up to Coscob.' He always replied in the character assigned him and never failed to turn the tables on the interlocutor. Indeed it was not worth one's while to undertake to badger him unless one was prepared to undergo a capital mauling in return. One did not always get it, but that was merely because he was not in the mood.

Miller thought, in the light of the mistakes that were made, and the resemblances that were fancifully traced, that he must have 'a Protean physiognomy.' The regular inquiry

met him when he returned from a long journey, 'Whom have you been taken for this trip?'

Two or three winters ago he boarded a Pullman and settled himself in his seat. Across the aisle sat a gentleman and lady; with them was a little girl. The child stared at the newcomer with an air of profound and respectful interest. Presently she whispered something to her father who, smiling, shook his head. In a moment or two the gentleman came over to Miller, and begging his pardon for disturbing him said, 'I think you may be interested to know that my little daughter has just asked me if you were George Washington.'

One would like to know what was our friend's comment; it is certain to have been witty.

Miller was much diverted by the efforts of men with whom he came in occasional contact — clerks, porters, barbers, waiters, and the like — to learn something about him. They were sure that he was a personage merely from his looks, and that he was also one of the right

sort they were firmly convinced from his friendliness of manner and the generous estimate he put on their services. He was content, however, to let them guess.

There was a certain barber, an Anglo-German, most polite and very precise of speech, to whose shop Miller resorted at intervals. On the occasion of the fourth or fifth visit the barber approached the subject nearest his heart in this way:

Barber: 'You are an Englishman?'

Miller: 'No.'

Barber (*in a tone of great surprise*): '*Not* an Englishman?'

Miller: 'No.'

Barber (*evidently much disappointed*): 'I always thought that you were an Englishman.'

Miller: 'No.'

Barber (*very apologetically*): 'Then I *withdraw* my thoughts.'

Of quite another sort was his conversational encounter with a plain citizen somewhere out

in Kansas. He was waiting for his train on the station platform, bareheaded as usual. The plain citizen eyed him for a while, and then slouched up to put this question: 'Are you a Frenchman?'

'No,' said Miller, 'why did you ask?'

'Because,' responded the other, with much deliberation, 'you look exactly like a French cook that used to live down our way, and when I first saw you I thought you was him.' After a moment's pause the plain citizen added meditatively, 'He was the *meanest* man I ever knew.'

Miller held firm opinions as to how a traveller should conduct himself towards the servants of a railway company, especially those who were in no position to resent a liberty. His idea of the complete boor was a loud-mouthed man who hails every sleeping-car porter as 'George.' He maintained that the fellow had no more right to call the porter 'George' than he had to call him 'Zerubbabel.' His own

attitude was always that of perfect consideration.

Waiters at the restaurants which Miller frequented knew him for a brother man and were glad to serve him. He entertained large views on the subject of tips. Before the meal was half eaten one might expect to hear him say, 'Now what shall we give the waiter? He's been extremely nice to us. Don't you think so?'

He always made a wonderful show of being just in the matter of tips, maintaining that one should give what was right and no more. Yet I cannot recall the time when his estimate of what was right did not greatly exceed my own. His theory of the tip might have been expressed by the formula 'ten per cent on the cost of the meal,' but in practice he made it twenty and twenty-five per cent.

Miller sometimes astonished the chance observer by certain eccentricities of dress. When he bought a new hat he would insist on

its being punctured with numerous fine holes. By taking this precaution, and adding thereto the more effective one of carrying the hat in his hand, he contrived to get the amount of air he needed for his scalp's health. At one time he owned a soft brown felt hat, in the centre of which he had carved a hole the size of a silver dollar. At some hotel where he was stopping for a night he deposited it on the rack outside the dining-room and went in to his supper. When he came out and looked for his hat he found that a circular piece of white paper had been neatly glued over the orifice. He learned afterward that the clerk of the hotel had been the instigator of this bit of playfulness. Miller's letter to the proprietor apropos of the indignity was a little masterpiece. He quoted it to me in full, and now I regret not having taken a copy of it.

Whether it did any good may well be doubted. The striking though not always legible handwriting, the many abbreviations, and the clev-

erly involved sentences would not fit the document for carrying light into the dark places of a small-hotel proprietor's mind. We used to tell Miller that when he wished to administer a rebuke he should do it by word of mouth, never in writing.

While Miller seldom wore a hat and did not always carry one, he might be seen in city thoroughfares with appropriate head-gear conventionally placed. He had an immense head and a wealth of hair, and as he always bought his hats by the 'size,' paying little heed to the height of the crown or the width of the brim, many of them looked too small for their wearer. Whereby a wag was led to say to me, 'Why does your eccentric friend wear that button on the top of his head?' I explained that the object in question was a hat. 'Oh, really!' exclaimed the wag; 'I am very glad to learn that. I saw him at a distance in Copley Square and *I* supposed that he was wearing a button.'

Miller resented the remark at first, not on

his own account but because it belittled the hat. Then he accepted it in his humorous and philosophical manner, and when we were leaving the hotel he said, with a smile, as he picked up the abused article, 'I'll wear my Lindsay-Swift button.'

A man who speaks six nights a week for forty consecutive weeks, often travelling two and three hundred miles between each pair of lectures, gets in the way of underestimating the importance of his relation to a particular audience. He is a little astonished to find that they really care to hear him, and he cannot quite see why they should be greatly disturbed if he fail to make his appearance. Miller preferred always to keep his engagements, but it has been remarked that he was singularly placid when he missed one.

He took all sorts of risks. The last train that would bring him to his appointment in time was the train for him. Six or seven years ago he had an engagement to speak at Mays-

ville, Kentucky. The committee wrote him urging the importance of his coming by the earlier of two afternoon trains from Cincinnati. He put the letter in his pocket, did the bookshops all day, and took the second train according to his habit. He was due in Maysville at five minutes past eight and arrived there at twenty minutes of nine. Leaving his bag at the station he ran the whole distance to the lecture-hall. He was dishevelled, black with car-soot, and wet with perspiration. A lady who was present told me that 'he could hardly have looked worse had he driven the locomotive down from Cincinnati.'

The audience resented having had to wait forty-five minutes, and resented even more the state in which he presented himself. But Miller proved to be as eloquent as he was certainly travel-stained. By the time he had uttered a dozen sentences his hearers forgot their griefs. They were captivated by him. When he finished talking they crowded around the plat-

form to shake his hand, an attention 'a' could never abide,' and the committee refused to let him leave the hall until he had fixed approximately a date for a second lecture that same season.

A prospect of ten consecutive months at hotels, with only a few intervals of home life, is dreary at the best. Miller was one of those even-tempered travellers who know how to make the best of the worst surroundings. A room looked habitable almost from the moment of his taking possession. No matter how angular the furniture, how repulsive the wall-paper, how barren the outlook from the windows, all became transfigured in the light of his genial presence. A row of books was set up on the mantelpiece, the table was covered with magazines, book-catalogues, and newspapers, and an air of comfort and orderly disorder reigned at once.

Miller had his favorite camping-out places when on the road, and clung to them as he

clung to other old friends. He must have frequented the Hotel Grace in Chicago for not less than twenty-five years. When in Philadelphia he used formerly to go to Zeiss's, in Walnut Street. Later he transferred his affections to the Little Hotel Wilmot, in South Penn Square. The quaint old-world air of this minute hostelry attracted him, and he never tired of the swinging sign over the door. 'Don't you *like* it? Don't you *like* it?' he would say, pointing upward. The location, quite near to his club and even nearer the railway station, was a convenient one for him.

Almost from boyhood he had put up at the Grand Union Hotel in New York, taking great satisfaction in its labyrinthine passages and the cozy grill-room with the framed prints and programs. It was chiefly sentiment, I think, that led him to take up quarters at the Clarendon, near Union Square. That was the hotel where Thackeray stopped in 1853. Miller once asked the night-clerk whether it was known

what room or rooms Thackeray had occupied, and was told that the man who was on duty in the day-time could probably tell him: 'He knows all our regular people.'

Miller had little work in New England the latter part of his life. If by any chance he came to Boston he was sure to take a room at the Crawford House, and take his meals at Marston's. Identifying the hotel in Scollay Square with the Crawford's of Whittier's poem he used to regret that the word 'inn' had not been retained.

A man who wanders as he did, from Dan to Beersheba, will find much to incommode him in the poorer caravansaries. 'Every traveller 'is a self-taught entomologist,' said Oliver Wendell Holmes. When forced to put up with ill-kept quarters Miller said nothing, but rejoiced in the consciousness of being a pilgrim and a stranger who could tarry but a night. Going to his room once at some large and old hotel, the name of which I have (purposely)

forgotten, I was struck with the air of neglect that hung over the place.

'Don't the cockroaches run, Jahu, when you open your door to go in?' I asked.

'Run?' he exclaimed, cheerfully; 'far from it. They stand and wave to me.'

Philosopher though he was, his thoughts must have turned, in surroundings like these, to certain homes where everything a man could ask in the way of perfect physical surroundings and unstinted hospitality awaited him.

IV

MILLER looked on books as something to be acquired, just as he looked on dollars as something to be got rid of. From this clearly defined position he never varied a hair's breadth.

Sane people often ask, 'What makes a man want to collect books?' and to speak truth, one is puzzled to know how to answer them. Perhaps the man does not want to do as he does, but cannot help himself. On the whole, Miller's idiosyncrasy is best accounted for as the philosopher accounted for the relation between wedges and logs of wood. 'A wedge splits logs,' said this acute reasoner, 'by virtue of a log-splitting quality in the wedge.' And similarly, Dewitt Miller collected books by virtue of a book-collecting quality in Dewitt Miller.

He seems to have begun heaping up treasures in print in his youth, and to have been chiefly covetous of such bibliographical rarities as

Greeley's *The American Conflict*, Richardson's *The Field, the Dungeon, and the Escape*, Wendell Phillips's *Orations*, and the *Sermons* (in any number of volumes) of Henry Ward Beecher. He had a great mass of anti-slavery and Civil War literature in his Library at Forest Glen, near Washington, a part of which certainly represents his first steps toward the forming of a collection of his own. He also yearned, in those callow days, to own complete files of his pet newspapers, and would even go to the expense of having them bound. These awful tomes, of portentous size and corresponding unwieldiness, were rather an annoyance to him in later years, but he had not the heart to part with them.

At what period he became sensible of the charm of a book as a work of art cannot now be determined. It must have been a little prior to 1888, for in that year he was collecting the pretty duodecimos of William Pickering and anything with Moxon's imprint on the title-

page. From me he learned about John Baskerville; it was the first time I had the privilege of being his instructor — and also the last. Isaac H. Hall, of the Metropolitan Museum, had put me in the way of acquiring the little *Horace* of 1762, a volume which has been described as the 'most beautiful' of all Baskerville's books. For a time I carried it with me on my journeyings, to gloat over. Miller saw it in my possession, plied me with questions about it, and enjoyed no peace of mind until he had procured a copy for himself.

His enthusiasm for Baskerville grew until he had accumulated enough examples of the great Birmingham printer's art to satisfy his craving. It then waned a little but never entirely disappeared. He was always ready to talk about this prime favorite of his. A memoir of Baskerville was printed at Cambridge, England, in 1907, and in the list of subscribers may be read the name of Dewitt Miller.

When he had conceived a passion for a cer-

tain printer (or author) our friend could not be prevented from snapping up every specimen of the man's work that came his way. This led to his entertaining unawares a number of rather distinguished volumes. He had picked up, during the period of his Baskerville craze, four charming little classics, a *Lucretius*, a *Horace*, and two others, bound in grained red leather. Where they came from, or what they cost him he was never able to tell. For years he lost sight of them, or lost consciousness, rather; the smiling little red books were always in plain sight.

We jogged his memory about them one day. He asked where they were, got them down from their resting-place on a gallery shelf, found them delectable and purred over them in his customary style. The question was then raised of their having been bound by Roger Payne; it was only a conjecture, but there was a basis for it. Miller, who was always thoroughly alive, now began to live one hundred and twenty seconds

to the minute. Such a scurrying among books of reference, such a jotting down of data, and piling up of proofs, and writing of letters to able authorities, could only be witnessed when our friend was on the bibliophilic war-path. He had not had so good a time in months.

That the books were what they appeared to be he was perfectly convinced within a day or two. It gave him immense satisfaction to learn that he possessed Baskervilles bound by Roger Payne. 'I knew that I had distinguished guests under my roof,' he said, beaming, 'but I was not aware that they were so highly connected.' Presently he added, (it was the only formula he permitted himself to use in commending his own collection,) 'If a man were to take the trouble to go over these volumes thoroughly one by one, he might, I believe, discover some very interesting items.'

This was the last of Miller's adventures among books. He left his Library shortly afterward, and never saw it again.

'I care nothing for first editions,' he has been overheard to say. He meant no more than that he was not mad about them. The truth is that he had a perfectly healthy interest in first editions and owned a great many; he also liked a second edition, and a third, and even a twenty-third. No one has heard him say that he cared nothing for his first edition of Boswell's *Johnson*. When news came of the splendid sum fetched by Gray's *Elegy* at the Hoe sale, Miller got out his copy for inspection and comment. A very good copy it was, and cost him nearly three dollars.

These incidents belong to a later period of his book-collecting and do not properly fall within the limits of this chapter. We are to think of him now as he might have appeared almost any time between 1887 and 1897, when he was mastering his subject and rifling the book-shops between New York and Denver of the good and the indifferent alike. It may be said once for all that when Miller bought a

poor copy of a thing he usually had a good motive. Either there was a gap in the shelves devoted to a certain subject, which needed to be filled, or he knew of some one to whom the book in any form would be a god-send, provided it was complete from title-page to index.

One important qualification he had for the rough-and-tumble phases of book-hunting — he was not too dainty. For a man who spent so large a fraction of his time at the Turkish bath he was singularly indifferent to dirt, or rather, to the kind of dirt that accumulates on books. If he suspected that the treasure he sought might be lurking in the heap before him he went gaily at it with both hands. He clung to swaying step-ladders at a perilous height to get at the rows of books which your true second-hand dealer always keeps concealed behind other rows, lest a customer should learn of their existence and insist on laying down money in exchange for them. He could hunt books from nine in the morning until five in the

afternoon, and be as fresh and enthusiastic at the end of the day as he was at the beginning. That he did not run his legs off in the chase was principally due to the fact that it could not be done; for years together he seemed incapable of understanding the meaning of the term 'physical weariness.' He was never bored, and better still, was never persuaded of the futility of the whole business. In short he was a thorough sportsman, and belonged, by virtue of his sportsman-like qualities, to the school of Heber and of Locker-Lampson.

When asked what he aimed at in his collecting Miller had one reply: 'The building up of a good general library.' It was not to be a museum of bookish curiosities but a place where a man might read to heart's content on many topics. A later chapter will show, though imperfectly, that he came within sight of his goal.

In the years of which I now speak Miller got little out of his books beyond the considerable pleasure of acquisition. He carried a few with

him, a dozen or twenty, those in which for the time being he was particularly interested; the greater number went to his sister's house in the country and he saw them not above two or three times a year. But it was something to know that they were there, and to dream of the time when he might so order his life as to admit of his enjoying a month or two every year with his beloved volumes.

His bills for expressage must have been formidable. It was his habit to accumulate little hoards of books at the shops he most frequented. A box was placed for his convenience under a counter and into it would go whatever he had bought there or in that vicinity. These small receptacles he called his bins. At intervals he would order a bin cleared and the contents shipped to some point where he proposed to spend a few weeks, and later reshipped to New York; whence the heavy package, augmented by the addition of numerous small packages, would make its way (always by express) to the

final resting-place up country. Miller has been known to resent the price of a hotel room, but seldom the price of a book, and never the cost of carting any number of books half the length of the continent.

The booksellers generally in the large cities knew him and welcomed his coming. There were very few shops where he did not feel at home. His criticism of the places he disliked took no more pronounced form than 'I never seem to find anything there,' or 'They have, *me judice*, an exaggerated notion of the value of a book,' or 'At that store the efforts of ignorant and officious clerks to be attentive make browsing difficult if not impossible.' He was driven out of one book-shop by a stripling who guessed, doubtless from Miller's appearance and talk, that he must certainly be in want of Marie Corelli's last novel, and undertook to sell him a copy. It would be a gifted salesman who could persuade Dewitt Miller to buy *The Sorrows of Satan* or *The Mighty Atom* against his will.

When money was plentiful he bought as he would; when depressed financially (the best of lecturers have their dark days) he showed remarkable skill in rooting out good things from the five and ten cent shelves and boxes. His crowning achievement, in the rôle of poor collector, was in 'booking' for six consecutive days on fifty cents a day. He performed this feat in the city of Philadelphia one poverty-stricken September. Truly amazing was it at night-fall to see what he would bring out of the dark-green lawyer's bag which he always carried on his expeditions — good pamphlets historical and literary, clean copies of old magazines containing the first issue of some famous tale or essay, and many a two-volume novel of the 1837 period, bound in plain boards with paper labels.

He bought for five cents the first English edition of Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* and rejoiced in its spotless condition as a hopeful sign that it had never been read. The book is

not one to yearn for, either as a bibliophile or an amateur of letters. Nevertheless it has a history, and any book with a history, any book that has held its own in spite of jeers and anathemas, was a book for the liberal-minded Miller. He was best pleased, when during this impoverished period, he lighted on copies of 'The Token,' with the old-fashioned steel engravings and tales 'by the author of "The Gentle Boy."' Five cents did not seem an extravagant sum to lay out on one of these.

To hear him descant on the joys and possibilities of book-hunting on fifty cents a day you would have said that he preferred it to any other form of the sport. The oratorical instinct prompted him always to enlarge on an idea, to embroider it and show it off in various lights. He preferred existence on the broad scale. Convinced, it may be, that he would never be so poor again he took real pleasure in glorifying the condition in which he found himself for the moment.

Go where Miller would the opportunities for buying books strewed his path, and he often came on a bargain in the unlikeliest of places. On one of his flying trips to Boston he asked where he might go to have his trousers repaired — the ones he was wearing. I took him to the shop of an earnest little Hebrew tailor of my acquaintance. Miller sat behind a screen while the mending was in progress. On the broad window-sill of the shop lay three books, an edition of Shakespeare, possibly that to which B. W. Procter put his name, and for which Kenny Meadows drew illustrations. I told Miller that here was a bargain, teased him because of his helplessness, and only passed one of the volumes to him when he threatened to come out into the light of day as he was. Then began a dialogue between the book-collector and the tailor. It was really a pleasant occasion, and may readily be imagined: Miller trouserless behind the screen, talking in his sonorous voice, and the little tailor, his eyes

twinkling 'astride the immemorial nose,' making shrewd responses as he plied the needle, and holding out for a price he thought suitable to this his first excursion into the realm of book-barter.

He was no Shylock, the little man. The price he asked was a fair one; Miller was glad to pay it, and the tailor equally glad to be rid of the Shakespeare. The bargain was completed by the time the last stitch was taken. Our friend resumed his garment and walked off with the books under his arm.

V

Dewitt Miller accounted himself fortunate above most men in the friends he possessed. Their number if not exactly legion was at all events great. Though not outwardly demonstrative he cherished them in his heart of hearts, and had a thousand ways of showing that he was mindful of their love. They on their part were always eager to do more for him than he would accept. Their prime difficulty lay in making him understand how well disposed they were, or if not that, then in persuading him to act on the understanding. He was the least calculating of men; never in the slightest degree would he presume on a friendship.

At times he quite irritated people by his odd way of holding off. Once when he failed to appear in season at a house where for him the latch-string always hung out, the impetuous

mistress exclaimed, 'Well, if he thinks after all these years that he's going to have a formal invitation on gilt-edged paper, he's much mistaken.'

Nevertheless the invitation was sent, by telegram, commanding him in round terms to make his appearance at once, and no longer behave like a pouting school-boy. As a matter of course he promptly came; he relished a message of the emphatic sort.

'Did you think you would get your special gilt-edged invitation, Jahu?' he was asked as he alighted from his cab, laden with two fat suit-cases and a shawl-strap full of books.

'I was sanguine to the extent of listening for early intimations of its approach, Indian fashion, with one ear on the ground,' he replied.

While there may have been a touch of the perverse in this trick of holding off, (as if he were waiting to be urged for the pleasure of being urged,) it is safe to say that genuine deli-

cacy lay at the bottom of it. Not for a world of first editions would he have given his hosts an excuse for thinking that they had had a little too much of him.

An expression often on Miller's lips was 'So-and-So has been very good to me.' To name by name even a fair-sized fraction of the large number of people who, in the course of his life, had been good to him, is not the purpose of the present writer. Still less is it his idea to assign to those he does mention a sort of rank in the hierarchy of Dewitt Miller's affections. The man did not classify his friends, any more than he measured out his gratitude in proportion to the number of favors he had received.

It would be unjust both to him and to them not to make clear how much accrued to him in the way of good fellowship and unstinted hospitality through his acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Francis Wilson, and Mr. and Mrs. John Irvin Cassedy. From the status of a man

with no home, other than his club and his hotel, our friend passed to that of a man with two homes, one near New York City and one near Washington.

Miller had known (and admired) Francis Wilson as a comedian for some time before he knew him as a friend. The two collectors were introduced to each other at Morris's book-shop, in Chicago, in 1891. Wilson used to give for the entertainment of his friends an imitation of Miller as he appeared to him at that first meeting, taking off with amusing exactness the pose, the gestures, the rapid utterance, the facial contortions, and the quick 'teetering' step with which he shot out of the door when the brief chat was at an end. 'It was like an electric shock,' said Wilson. 'I *experienced* him, but by the time I had rubbed my eyes so as to take him all in, he was gone.'

Miller paid his first visit to 'The Orchard,' the Wilson home at New Rochelle, some time the following autumn. He then learned that

while 'any husband' may invite a man to his house, it pretty much rests with 'any wife' to make the visit a source of pleasant recollections. He never forgot the cordiality with which he was received by the lady of that hospitable home.

Miller resembled Washington Irving in one particular — he was 'delightful as a domestic animal.' The two daughters of the house, small children at that time, were pleased to find that this large, well-languaged gentleman whom their father had brought out of the West, would play hide-and-seek with them just before their bed-time, all the rooms on the second floor being darkened for the purpose and everybody's shoes taken off, and that he could be persuaded at long intervals to delight them with his bear-dance. Miller's mimetic gifts were slender, but he gave a pretty good imitation of a laughing hyena in a cage, and of a bear clumsily waltzing on its hind legs. Few people have seen these gems of art. He could only be induced to

perform when he was in an exalted mood, and had as an audience the children of friends he trusted.

It may be guessed that visits so successful, from the point of view of both the entertainers and the entertained, would be frequently repeated. And so they were. Miller's appearances at 'The Orchard,' year after year, were only a little less regular than those of the seasons.

He was generally there in the month of September, and for periods varying from ten days to four weeks. A room known as the 'Tent Room' was assigned him; it came in time to be known as his, and finally to be called by his name. He always brought a quantity of books with him, as many as he could stagger under, and two or three packages followed by express, the spoils of a summer's browsing among the book-shops of Chicago, Kansas City, and Saint Louis. He seldom took away above a tenth of what he brought, and in conse-

quence his stock of literature at 'The Orchard' accumulated.

Shelves were built in the 'Tent Room' for the accommodation of Miller's books, and then more shelves. When every available foot of wall-space was taken up shelves were erected for the new arrivals in the part of the large central hall adjacent to his domain, and finally the books overflowed into a small room across the hall. The outcome was that when Dewitt Miller paid his long vacation visit to the Wilson family he had not merely the use of his host's many and well-chosen books, but he dropped into a comfortable little library of his own, a collection of not less than fifteen or eighteen hundred volumes.

These books remained at 'The Orchard' until that attractive residence was abandoned by its owners in favor of another. They were then nearly all shipped to Forest Glen, whither by this time the bulk of Miller's treasures had gone.

The advantage of having a large library in one place, and subsidiary libraries elsewhere, does not need to be explained to your genuine collector of books. Miller often found it of use in explaining real or seeming deficiencies in his stock. If some notable gap were discovered he could say, 'That book must be at the Glen,' or 'Sowers is keeping it for me,' or 'It is probably tucked away in my bin at Frank Morris's.' He would add, 'But I have it, I *know-w-w* I have it.' And lest there should be any doubt about his having it he would improve the first opportunity to buy another copy, 'So as to have one at both places in the event of our needing to consult it.' With him any excuse sufficed for the buying of duplicates.

A man who, like our friend, had spent the hottest weeks of a long summer in uninterrupted travelling and lecturing through ten states, might well rejoice when finally he landed at 'The Orchard.' Miller was much pleased with a custom which prevailed there of serving

a first breakfast of coffee and rolls to the guests in their own rooms at an hour of their own naming. For all that he was such an active fellow physically, there was a dash of the sybarite in him. As may be guessed he was a striking figure propped on the pillows, the steaming coffee-cup on a little table at his left hand, the counterpane littered with the New York morning papers, already riddled by his implacable scissors, the gigantic bibliography of first editions that he carried for years sprawled on its back within reach, twenty sheets of common hotel-stationery covered with his hieroglyphics and inserted between the leaves where new entries were to be made, and twice twenty books, not 'at his beddes heed,' but scattered over such parts of the bed as were not occupied by his very large self. He was never more entertaining in talk than at these morning hours, as the master of the house can bear witness.

Miller became greatly attached to the Wilsons' butler, Maurice Young. He used to say

that his idea of earthly bliss might be described somewhat as follows: To wake up in the 'Tent Room' after a good night's sleep, press the electric button at the head of the bed by which he regularly summoned Maurice, who should appear in due time with the tray on which were disposed the pot of coffee, the rolls and butter, the boiled eggs, the marmalade, and the morning papers. Having put the tray down Maurice would leave the room for a moment, to return as quickly as possible with a second tray on which should lie two crisp ten-dollar bills 'to buy a few books with.' Thus fortified in stomach and in purse Miller thought he might be able cheerfully to face his day. The service was not to vary from January to January.

He was the happiest of men during his vacation and literally basked in the comfort that surrounded him. As busy too as he was good-humored, he got through a deal of work, chiefly in the way of enlarging his stock of biblio-

graphical knowledge, supplemented by much letter-writing, and no end of clipping and pasting of the clippings in the backs of books.

All his whimsicalities come to mind as one thinks about him and recalls those holidays, as for example, his trick of going about on tip-toe with a springy kind of step that set everything near him to vibrating. This he always did, for he was most considerate of the comfort of others, when some one he wished not to disturb was taking a nap or writing a letter. It was his way of being quiet. He seemed to think that if he made no noise with his heels, merely shook the whole house, all was well.

At 'The Orchard' one had the privilege of becoming acquainted with his skill at the only out-of-door game he ever played. On the plot of ground back of the house were an excellent tennis-court and an indifferent croquet-field. When it was learned that Miller had a passion for croquet the field was improved, and new

balls and mallets ordered from the city. Many a hot contest took place there, for the man played with demoniacal energy and proved to be invincible. His enthusiasm was catching and through one unforgettable season every member of the household became absorbed in the old-fashioned game.

The sport was often protracted to a late hour. One picture quite vivid to my mind is of a game that was fiercely contested after nightfall. I can see Miller padding over the turf mallet in hand, and the two little girls running about in a state of intense excitement, holding their small lanterns over the wickets so that the combatants might see to make their shots, and the group of watchers on the veranda, jeering or applauding as the fortunes of war turned, but rather less interested in the outcome than in a considerable display of human nature on the part of the players. Our friend fought for victory; you might take all his books and appropriate the contents of his wallet, but you

might not rob him of a game of croquet when it was in his power to prevent you.

He could never be persuaded to try his hand at golf, though he believed that in so far as strength is an important element of success he was fitted to shine at the game.

'Could you do that?' I asked, as we watched a magnificent drive.

'I am not at all sure that I could hit the ball,' he replied; and then added, with his characteristic chuckling laugh, 'But I am confident of one thing — if I ever *did* hit it, an exploring party provisioned for thirty days would need to be sent out to ascertain its whereabouts.'

Knowing Miller for the most entertaining and amiable of house companions one is tempted to speculate as to the sort of man he would have been in a home of his own. Considering him in the light of a Benedict one thing at least can be predicated — his wife would never have had to ask for money.

He never married. Perhaps it is well that

he did not. Marriage means surrender — to a certain extent. The compensations are reported to be enormous, but there is no doubt as to the fact of surrender. Now Miller was at heart a nomad, a blend of gipsy scholar and gipsy book-hunter, impatient under restriction of any sort, though commonly betraying his impatience in ways not unpleasant but most amusing to the spectator. Prescribe a social duty for him, one that smacked in the least of the conventional, or attempt seriously to regulate his movements, and you had a problem on your hands.

Speaking then with a certain amount of exaggeration one may say of Miller that if there was a particular place to which he ought to go, he gave the impression of being extremely loath to go there. Merely because of this idiosyncrasy he was better off as a bachelor. Marriage means a home, but home is a place to which even the wandering lecturer is obliged occasionally to go.

VI

During these years his principal library — a much smaller collection than it is now, but of a respectable size, nevertheless — was at Carmel, New York, housed in the village store of which mention has already been made. Miller felt that the books were safest there, where his sister, Mrs. Webb, could overlook them from time to time, but he never pretended that they were easy to get at.

They might have remained at Carmel to this day had not the growth of his friendship with Mr. and Mrs. John Irvin Cassedy led to their proposing, and his gladly accepting, another plan for the care of his bookish treasures.

His acquaintance with these two people, who were to do so much for his comfort, began at Norfolk, Virginia, where for some years they conducted a school for girls and young women;

he twice gave the annual Commencement address, and lectured for them on yet other occasions. When, in 1894, they founded a new school at Forest Glen, Maryland, nine miles from Washington, Miller was told that in spite of their nearness to the National fountain-head of oratory, they must still depend in a measure on his services. And so he continued his visits, and came to be looked on, not as the mere non-resident lecturer (one of many), but as a particular friend. It was several years, however, before the idea of his having a library there took shape.

The project was treated at first with an air of frank pleasantry. Miller did not, I believe, quite grasp the fact that these people who could jest so easily about putting up a library for him were quite in earnest. At the same time he liked to hear the plan discussed.

We who heard the discussions used to tell Mrs. Cassedy that it was evident she was founding an asylum for geniuses, *à la* Tammas

Haggart, and that Miller was to be the first inmate. She would laugh merrily and reply that at all events her flock of geniuses need have no fear of being confined under one roof; they should occupy a row of artistic cottages, one to each, along the highway to the west of the main building, and be free to go and come at their pleasure.

The rapid growth of the school compelled the putting up of new buildings or the reconstruction of old ones. There was often a little army of workmen in the field through the summer months, and it was a comparatively simple matter in Mr. Cassedy's opinion to run up one more structure of moderate size. Miller was lucky in having a patron of the constructive turn of mind. Cassedy's associates have long known him for a man to whom problems in stone and timber, in plaster and paint, offer no terrors. With him building has not been a discipline but rather a sport. It follows from this, as well as from his affection for our friend,

that he took a deep personal interest in the erection of the 'Miller Library.'

The work was completed by the beginning of winter, 1901, and Miller gave the order to have all his belongings shipped by freight from Carmel. On a day in late January the first case of books was opened. By way of investing the affair with some pomp and circumstance three of us, solemnly and simultaneously, put a hand into the box, drew out each a book, and as solemnly placed the three books side by side on a shelf; we then sent word to Miller (who was at that time lecturing in the West), that some headway had been made in the classification of the library.

He took formal possession in May, and for the next ten years he was regularly at the Glen during that month, besides making shorter visits at irregular intervals through the year. He became a factor in the school life, was invested with the office of chaplain, conducted the news-classes from time to time, made an

admirable patron saint to the club which had chosen him for an honorary member, and proved himself everybody's friend.

In describing the Library one finds oneself instinctively using the past tense; the genius of the place is gone.

The first floor consisted of a single large room, and running completely around it, a gallery reached by a stairway immediately at the right as one entered. At one end of the room was a fire-place in rough stone flanked by settles. At the opposite end, near an immense window opening down the Glen, stood the writing-desk and a homely cane-seated revolving-chair. The desk was a long, narrow, old-fashioned contrivance, with shallow drawers, a sloping top that could be lifted, and a small horizontal space at each end for the accommodation of ink-bottles and paste-pots. When there was nothing on it but a pad of paper and a dozen envelopes it might have been accounted a fairly roomy desk. One

might depend, however, on its being covered with everything it could be made to hold.

The truth is that this desk, to which Miller clung as tenaciously as to his old experienced working-coat, held about one quarter of the stuff he wanted within reach when he was at work. To meet his further needs he had a nest of little tables (with preposterously long legs), two or three of which were always gathered about him, and piled high with pamphlets, journals, letters, bundles of clippings, and what not. The frail little tables fairly staggered under the weight imposed on them. Now and then one sunk to the floor from sheer exhaustion, and then must the help of Miller's mechanical friend, Jeremiah Blackburne, be called in to repair the damage.

Every inch of wall-space in the room was shelved and crowded with books. A wide opening opposite the main entrance led to a second and even more attractive room, also shelved to its capacity, galleried like the first, and pro-

vided with a sky-light. In this room was a library-table of such noble dimensions that four authors could have done their work on it simultaneously without quarreling overmuch. In addition to the open shelves there were a half dozen cases with glass doors in which our collector kept many of his finer and rarer volumes. And chairs of course, easy and otherwise, in great profusion. They served to sit on, put books in, or to fall over. When Miller was left alone for half a day he filled every chair in the room, save one, with books; and the place never looked more attractive than it did at these times, with evidences on every side that he was grappling with his library.

On the posts that supported the gallery in the main room and on the gallery rail itself, hung a number of portraits, a few of them framed up with autograph letters. Statesmen, soldiers, men of letters, a composer of popular songs, a philosopher, and a group of personal friends (some of them life-sized and staring

prodigiously) constituted Dewitt Miller's art collection. It was a heterogeneous assortment, but then — he was a heterogeneous person. And if it pleased him to hang Charles Eliot Norton and Dan Emmett in close proximity there is no good reason why he should not have had his way.

One sometimes paid dearly for the privilege of having one's face in a frame in the Library. There was no limit to Miller's inventiveness when the mood for banter was on him. When the glass that covered one of these photographs became broken he declined to have it replaced, on the ground that it would almost immediately crack again. It must not be supposed that he put the idea in so bald a form. He was polysyllabic, allusive, and alliterative. His statement of the case drew a shout of laughter from every one present, including the victim. Lest any blame should attach to himself from the broken glass on the score of indifferent house-keeping, he wrote on a card the sub-

stance of what he had just said and stuck the card in the glass; it remained there for months.

Hanging from the gallery-rail near the fireplace was an object that seemed out of keeping with its bookish surroundings, namely a huge wasps' nest, doubtless a survival from boyhood days, a reminder of the period of our friend's earliest collecting. Miller was very fond of it. Some one had told him of John Josselyn, the early New England tourist, and his misadventure; who, walking in the woods, 'chanced to spy a fruit, as I thought, like a 'pine-apple plated with scales. I made bold to 'step unto it, with an intent to have gathered 'it. . . . By the time I was come into the house 'they hardly knew me but by my garments.' Miller had this passage printed in boldfaced type and tacked up under his beloved wasps' nest.

From the gallery of the main room a narrow staircase led to the second floor. When I say 'a narrow staircase' I do not mean that it was

not wide enough to serve its purpose. But Miller insisted on putting book-shelves along its entire length, and as a result he had almost to go up and down sideways. He has been known to rub off books as he descended in haste from the upper regions.

On the second floor were his bed-room and guest-chamber, a comfortably large hall, and a spacious covered veranda. In the hall he kept a big cedar chest filled with the sartorial accumulations of years. He had in full measure the bachelor's helplessness with respect to the care of bodily raiment. His clothes were made of the best and strongest materials, the seams welded rather than sewn. He never absolutely wore a suit out, and he lacked the courage to throw it away when it was no longer in the mode. Hence the plethoric state of the cedar chest.

No pleasanter sight was to be met with on a May morning than Dewitt Miller beating up the contents of the cedar chest for moths. He

did it with an energy akin to that he displayed in lecturing on 'Our Country's Possibilities and Perils.' I think it was a real relief to him when he found that in bestowing of his abundance on the negro workmen about the place he could do a deed of genuine kindness and himself lead the simpler life. But the facts had to be clearly laid before him.

Parallel with the hall and of equal length ran the great covered veranda, and this he turned into a sleeping-room. Only last May he was busy superintending the putting up of screens to keep out the 'matutinal fly.'

The walls of the hall were coated on both sides with books, and there were shelves in each of the bed-rooms. On first taking possession of the Library, Miller had placed several heavy cases in his own room next the partition, and filled them with his rarest books. He had an idea that the air was dryer up there, and that it was in all ways a better place for the 'nuggets' than on the ground level. Under

the weight of the cases the bed-room floor began little by little to sink, and kept on sinking until Miller feared that he might be in the plight of the man in the 'Purple Cow' book. That worthy had walls and a ceiling but no place to put his feet, and used to spring from the bed to the dresser, and from the dresser to the door.

When the lord of the manor was summoned to look at the damage that was being done he made no comment on the behavior of the floor, but remarked dryly that 'it was a pretty good partition that would stand without visible means of support.' The heavy book-cases were removed and there was no further settling. Miller even thought that the floor and the partition showed a tendency to reunite — which shows what an essentially optimistic nature he had.

Getting the books arranged in some semblance of order proved a long task, but at the same time an amusing and instructive one.

Miller learned many things about his possessions in the mere act of transporting them upstairs and downstairs, or from one side of the great room to the other side. He was glad to delegate a part of the work as he afterward had a chance to do. The classes in library-science were held in his building, much to his satisfaction, and the teacher in charge, Miss Freebey, took a more than common interest in the welfare of the books, and came in time to be spoken of as the librarian. Miller freely lent his volumes and had no concern for the length of time they stayed away, but was human enough to desire that they be brought back 'on or before 'the morning of the Great Assizes.' The jealous care shown for the safety of his treasures in his absence gratified him. He said gleefully of his librarian, 'I can always be sure of one thing — if she lends three books she will exact four in return.'

VII

To give an adequate account of Miller's books is work for the professed bibliographer, and in the following paragraphs one can do no more than throw out a few hints as to the sort of thing he liked to buy. It must be kept in mind that he belonged to the race of 'collectors omnivorous,' and was only prevented by lack of money from devouring the contents of whole book-shops at a meal.

For books of reference of all kinds he had a veritable passion. Encyclopædias were his joy, and the man who could get more comfort out of the *Dictionary of National Biography* than Miller, has yet to be found. The acquisition of a fat, double-columned, closely-printed, newly-revised and greatly-augmented compendium of knowledge — any kind of knowledge — gave him intense delight. He bought dictionaries of art, architecture, engineering,

music, medicine, furniture, classical antiquities, not because it is proper to buy them but because he had a craving for them. He packed his shelves with handbooks of proverbs and wise sayings, of superstitions, of characters of fiction, of last words of famous (or infamous) men, of all the odds and ends that have been partially classified and wholly alphabetized.

He found Dictionaries of the English language irresistible, and was in a way to collect them all, from the earliest and most unscientific glossary down to the great Oxford Dictionary, now in course of publication. Had he been one of the original projectors of James Murray's monumental work he could hardly have shown more enthusiasm as the successive volumes made their appearance. Small dictionaries he bought much as a man might buy grapes — by the bunch. Any word-book that came recommended by a scholarly name and a new treatment of the old material was certain to be added to his stock. He liked the manuals

that are ostensibly compiled for printers, and which prove so helpful to the rest of the world. One of his latest loves was the *Authors' and Printers' Dictionary* by F. H. Collins, a genuine thesaurus, by the way. He must have purchased twenty-five copies, for himself and his friends.

For books about books, general and special bibliographies, sale-catalogues and all other catalogues whatsoever, he had a collector's natural fondness. His imperfect knowledge of French cut him off from much that he would have found useful in this direction. Perhaps it is well that he did not conceive a passion for original editions of the Romantics; he would have found it costly. The books of Peacock, Borrow, Henry Taylor, and Edward FitzGerald seem more in keeping with his own tastes.

In looking over the shelves devoted to English history one might expect to find most of the works that a gentleman ought to have. Yet here as elsewhere he was governed in his

collecting by his personal preferences. He must, for example, have everything that came from the pen of E. A. Freeman, or of Goldwin Smith, and the unimportant fact that he already owned two copies of a given book was not allowed to stand in the way of his buying two more. Of biographies of English statesmen he had an abundance; biography in general was one of his hobbies.

He seemed more eager to collect editions of Thackeray than of Dickens, Trollope, Reade, 'George Eliot,' or the Brontës. One did well, however, not to criticise him for the meagreness of the show of books by a given author; it might turn out that the few he owned were presentation copies of no little value.

Passing over the modern poets and essayists, who were well represented, one must note Miller's great interest in Doctor Johnson and those about him. My impression is that he owned all the editions of Boswell, from the first two volume quarto to the last little pocket

edition printed on India paper. All the other lives, recollections, and estimates were on his shelves — Hawkins, Piozzi, Tyers, every catchpenny sketch or satirical squib, together with the considerable library of modern contributions to Johnsonian literature.

Were the booksellers about the country to be questioned as to Miller's preferences they would probably say that he cared most for a book that gave proof of having once been in its author's possession, the man's own copy with corrections by his hand, or a copy that he had given a friend and inscribed with a characteristic sentiment. The Library contained an uncommon number of just such agreeable items, and were a little descriptive catalogue to be made of them it could hardly be other than pleasant reading. Miller certainly looked upon these as the best feature of his collection.

He enjoyed giving distinction to a book by some touch of his own, as when he had a rose,

plucked from FitzGerald's grave ('by my friend Mr. Loder, stationer of Woodbridge, in my presence'), mounted in a panel and bound into an early (perhaps the first) edition of the *Rubáiyát*. Here is another illustration of what he liked to do: A certain publisher brought out an unauthorized edition of an early work by a celebrated American writer, now dead. The literary executor protested in terms that no pirate of sensitive disposition could enjoy reading. But Miller was sure that the legal publishers (who also published for the executor) had been selling copies of that identical work within the twelvemonth. He forwarded copies of both the authorized and the unauthorized edition to the editorial department of the house begging for an explanation. And the editorial department was so good-natured as to write on a fly-leaf of their edition a full account of the affair. It was a very singular story, and of no interest whatever except to book-collectors.

One is puzzled to know how to give an ac-

count of our friend's reading. He was constantly surprising us by revealing an acquaintance with some author we should have said he had never looked into. One afternoon in the Library I picked up his copy of *Sadducismus Triumphatus* and fell to reading here and there. Presently I read aloud a paragraph and asked him if it were not remarkably good writing, supposing that he would at once inquire what book I had. But without looking up from the newspaper he was clipping Miller replied, 'Oh, capital writer, capital! There are n't many men more vigorous than Joe Glanvil.'

It may have been a mere coincidence. Possibly he knew that one striking paragraph from 'Joe Glanvil' better than he knew the volume as a whole. On the other hand these coincidences were forever occurring; he must have read *in* a great many books, and persevered to the end of not a few. His faculty for getting always at the core of a book stood him

in good stead. He divined the exact location of what he wanted while another might have blundered about in search of it.

One may safely say that he preferred biographies, memoirs, table-talk, and collections of letters to every other form of literature, assuming him to be reading for pure intellectual pleasure. Pepys, Gibbon, Hume (in his correspondence), Madame D'Arblay, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Horace Walpole, Chesterfield, Gray, Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Byron the letter-writer, — he delighted in them all, and in the modern examples of epistolary and biographical art hardly less than in the earlier ones.

I think of him as having done his heroic reading between the ages of seventeen and thirty, or thereabouts, and as having read on a greater variety of subjects after he became a confirmed book-collector, but with less attention to each. There are good reasons for holding this view and none for holding it too rigidly. Miller was capable at any moment of

grappling with a heavy book on socialism or psychology, let us say, and of hanging on until he had mastered what it had to give.

And lastly, he was so constituted that his hearty admiration of *Culture and Anarchy*, *Studies in the Renaissance*, and *The Torch* did not in the least interfere with his enjoyment of the *Rhymes of Ironquill* and the lucubrations of 'Abe Martin.' To be so open-minded and friendly towards both men and books as was Dewitt Miller is to have inexhaustible sources of happiness at one's command.

VIII

His ordinary talk was much like his public discourse, but far richer and more varied, well worth any listener's while, even the most cultivated. They who have heard 'The Uses of Ugliness' and 'The Stranger at Our Gates' know something of Dewitt Miller; they alone have a right idea of his amazing mental activity and his wide knowledge of men and events whose privilege it has been to listen to him when he was not only in the mood to talk, but also in the mood to settle himself down and 'have his talk out.'

We who were often with him believed that he spoke remarkably good English. But were we competent to pronounce on the question? Did not Fitzedward Hall drop a hint to the effect that Americans could hardly be expected to know real English for the simple reason that they almost never had a chance to hear it

spoken? And did he not also say (or imply) that an American's only hope of learning to speak the language himself lay in his taking up residence in England, and there devoting himself to listening with both ears and watching every sentence that he uttered?

Something like that I seem to have read somewhere in Fitzedward Hall's books, — all of which, by the way, Miller bought, read in a little, and regularly quoted. With what humorous unction would he roll out the following sentence, in which the angry philologer berates another philologer: 'There is one of their num-'ber, however, a wholesale sponsor, and also 'an originator, of superficial conceits, whose 'clientry of clapper-clawers, misrepresenting 'the character of my strictures, and, fathering 'on me, with frontless mendacity, the most 'preposterous principles, have, in requital, 'shown themselves, as an old author phrases it, 'valiantly railipotent.'

I can still hear the cadence of Miller's voice

as he chanted the words 'valiantly railipotent,' giving every syllable its full value, and the gurgle of laughter with which he followed the quotation, and the large patter of his steps as he ran to put the book away, and his ejaculation of 'Very entertaining old gentleman, Fitzedward Hall, very!'

Two of Miller's friends were speaking of his charm as a converser (he had that moment left them), and they remarked that if he lived to be seventy-five or eighty as he seemed likely to do, and retained all his powers, the young men who heard him in his old age would probably say to one another that that must have been the way in which all cultivated gentlemen used to talk in the Nineties and the early Nineteen hundreds; and they would perhaps lament the decay of the art of conversation, and have a sentimental word to say about the good old times. Now the truth is that Dewitt Miller stood almost in a class by himself. One does not often meet with men so fertile in

ideas and so affluent of speech as was he. A typical American through and through, he seemed to belong to an earlier age and an older country. He might have lived at Halliford on the Thames, and been intimate with Thomas Love Peacock. The author of *Crotchet Castle* would have liked Miller, I firmly believe, liked him in spite of the fact that his Greek was particularly small.

To account for the extraordinary power our friend displayed in talk is no easy matter. I have heard a critic who never uses the word lightly say, 'Genius, and nothing less.' That may be all there was of it. The man had an indubitable gift, one of the sort that Nature bestows at random, not even looking to see into whose keeping it falls.

That he did not trust to his gift alone but always took pains was evident to the most careless observer. When it came his turn to move in the conversational game he almost never moved at once. You could see that he was re-

volving the subject in his mind, looking on all sides of it, or if not all, on as many as he thought needful for his purpose. Owing to the great rapidity with which his mind worked you never had to wait long, but you waited, nevertheless, until he was quite ready to speak. The process was the same even when it was a question of repartee, a game at which he was amazingly quick and brilliant; he took his time to prepare, — an infinitesimal amount, to be sure, but enough.

To his habit of taking pains may be referred the clarity of his ideas and the freshness and vigor of his diction. He was never slovenly in his thinking or careless in his choice of terms. He never maundered. Rather than utter nothings in an aimless way (what he always described as 'chortling'), he would keep perfectly still.

The large words that he affected became him as they might not have become many another talker. Print the sentence as he uttered it and

its peculiar effectiveness in point of diction would be quite lost. The presence of the man, the tones of his voice, the facial expression, all the elements that go to make the orator and the table-talker must be taken into account. And it is well to bear in mind that Miller often used polysyllabic words with a humorous or an ironical intent.

He was no tyrant in talk but a man who could listen to others patiently and appreciatively, and for any length of time. Never was he known to give signs of uneasiness because the leadership had not been handed over to him. He was incapable of that degree of egotism. If one of his long silences prompted the question, 'Why don't *you* say something, Jahu?' the response would be, 'I am listening, I am listening — and enjoying.'

And so he was; but whether he was enjoying what was said, or the lame efforts of the speakers to say something, did not always appear. At times he carried an inscrutable countenance.

Though he never consciously aimed at delivering a monologue he understood that difficult art, and practised it in places where he felt at liberty to do so. One heard him at his best when he held the centre of the stage and had become completely absorbed in the theme. It was pleasant, too, after he had maintained a paradox with large and flowing speech and a wealth of argument, to hear the scoffer's 'Well, you have at least got it out of your system, Jahu,' and then his almost liturgical 'Verily, verily, *animam liberavi*.'

He was never overbearing in conversation though often overpowering. The fault lay in his bringing to many a subject more mind than the subject deserved. Where the conversation lay between three or four, no one suffered; each did his share in bearing the burden of so exhaustive a treatment. But when the party consisted of Miller and one other, that one other had in general no resource but to sink back in his chair and let the billows of mingled sound

and sense roll over him. Had he been in any real danger of drowning, Miller himself would have been the first to perceive it.

In argument he was ingenious and usually sound, though he loved now and then to support a fantastical opinion. He enjoyed buffeting an adversary. But so good-natured was he that his hardest blows left the effect of having been delivered with a very soft boxing-glove; one might be disconcerted, as well as red in the face, but was otherwise none the worse for having been struck. Miller never shouted an adversary down. If, however, he felt that the need for vocal energy existed he would 'sound his barbaric yawp over the roofs 'of the world,' and rejoice in so doing. Ebullitions of this sort took place only among his intimates and were partly due to mere animal spirits.

While there were many topics on which he had little or nothing to say his range was by no means narrow. He talked remarkably well on

politics and American political history. But one can see now that the parts of the history for which he greatly cared were those contemporaneous with his own life, or very nearly so. One never heard him expatiate on the Revolution, or the War of 1812, or the growth of the 'American system,' or the struggle between Jackson and South Carolina; it was when he reached the period of the Lincoln-Douglas debates that he became copious.

Albeit he was only a boy when the Civil War ended, his knowledge of the causes leading up to the great struggle, and of the men who were foremost in the government during the years of its prosecution, was full and gave every sign of being exact. So vivid were the pictures he drew that he seemed at times to be speaking as an eye-witness. A listener unacquainted with his real age would have said that Miller had undoubtedly heard many an exciting debate and been present at many a turbulent political gathering between 1857 and 1865.

His command of mere names and dates was astonishing, and to loose talkers, annoying. Conscious of being in the right, opposition made him positive, even superlatively positive. Then would he roll his head from side to side as he talked, and emphasize his statements by slapping softly and repeatedly on the table with the flat of his large white hands.

Of late years his talk ran less on modern English political history than it once did. His strength there lay in a broad knowledge of the events that touched, however remotely, the careers of Disraeli and Gladstone. Not a book, or pamphlet, or leading article that concerned either of these two escaped his eye. But when Gladstone died our friend's interest in English politics rather declined.

It is a singular fact that this passionate collector was at heart far more curious about humanity than about printed paper, and would any time throw aside a book to talk with a man. He had met so many people of varying degrees

of celebrity, and so many people 'who had no name at all' but were none the less interesting on that account, that he was often at his best when human nature, exemplified in any one of several hundred men and women, was his theme.

Progressive movements in the scientific, the social, and the ecclesiastical worlds always attracted him; he talked well on many a topic of that sort. His knowledge of medicine and surgery was excellent for an amateur, and if he spoke, as he often did, of psycho-therapeutics, he could be depended on to discourse in a way that was certainly entertaining and possibly instructive. A man who heard Doctor Holmes talk on only one occasion remarked that his conversation, though witty, contained 'too great an infusion of physiological and medical metaphor.' One sometimes remembered this criticism when Dewitt Miller was speaking.

He gave, as a matter of course, no end of proofs that he had read his theological books,

and his knowledge of the English Bible must have been unusual if one may judge of it by the immense number of quotations and allusions one heard him make.

In a word, he had stored up a deal of miscellaneous information on a great variety of topics, more perhaps than any of us suspected; and without the least pretence to omniscience he made a free use of the store in his common everyday talk. One trait illustrative of his habit of mind stands out in bold relief now. Miller never despised the seemingly unrelated fact, the mere scrap of information that resembled nothing so much as a single page torn from a book. His avidity for these waifs and strays frequently moved us to laughter, as if we alone were grown up and he a precocious school-boy, cramming the pockets of his roundabout and knickerbockers with all manner of odds and ends, from twine to jack-knives. But we were not so wise as we thought. His instinct was sound. The unrelated fact presently

ranged itself, was drawn to other facts or became the centre of a group of its own, and when needed in conversation could be brought out and used with telling force. The sense of pleasurable surprise that one experienced while Dewitt Miller was talking may be referred in large degree to a skillful use of such material.

No record of his talk exists, and therefore no proof can be given that he was as many-sided and as brilliant as has been alleged. We who have heard him (and there are many hundreds of us) are firmly convinced of his ability. We can always say, one to another, 'You have heard him too, and you know.' We are modest in our claims, as becomes us in speaking of a man who always placed a modest estimate on his own powers. We do not say that he was a 'great converser,' but we hold, and will continue to hold, to the belief that of the gifts essential to the making of a great converser not a few were his.

IX

'This is not a record office for his sayings,' wrote Thomas Tyers in his sketch of Johnson, and then gives three of the Doctor's best. One would gladly be persuaded that three of Dewitt Miller's wittiest remarks had been included among the eight or ten that follow. Unhappily it is not a question of choosing from many good things in the hope of getting at the best, but of setting down the very few that cling to the memory, with private lamentations because their number is so small.

In printing these few one runs the risk of misrepresenting their author. It is laying more stress on them than was meant to be laid, — as if one were to frame and glaze a picture that was certainly worth keeping, though it would better have been pasted in a scrap-book than hung on the wall. Should they help the reader to recall other sayings of his and thereby help

in some degree to keep fresh and vivid the memory of his cheerful presence, they will have served a purpose.

There was a certain man, commonly spoken of in our immediate circle as the Deacon, with whom Miller had business relations for a brief time. He dropped a remark one day to the effect that the Deacon was anxious not alone for his worldly advancement, but also for his spiritual welfare. A bystander exclaimed sceptically, 'Brother X does n't pray with you, I hope.'

'No,' said Miller. 'Preys upon me. Has his choice of preposition.'

Of some boastful acquaintance who owned a house, and labored under the delusion that he also owned an estate, Miller said, with a grunt of amusement, 'Why, the fellow's plot of ground is so small that he could n't put his foot out of doors without trespassing.'

He took vast delight in gibing at the diminutive artificial lake much 'featured' in the

advertisements of a well-known summer resort among the hills of Maryland, affirming, for example, that 'a man fell into it the other day and soaked it all up; then he looked around and wondered how in the world he came to get wet.' Miller saw this minute body of water annually, and it always stimulated his invention.

He had a pleasant way of giving an unexpected turn to old formulas and set phrases. A friend sneezed prodigiously in his presence, and instead of blessing him in the customary fashion Miller cried, in a loud and joyous voice, 'God bless the earth and the fullness thereof!' The friend, a man of great resources, sneezed a second time, and louder than before. Whereupon Miller said (smiling), 'I 'll add two planets.'

When told of the extraordinary richness of a tract of land not far from his library Miller's eyes glittered with pleasure. And thinking of his favorite vegetables he said in a fervent tone, 'I wish I could farm it. I'd raise onions

as big as pumpkins, and pumpkins as big as asteroids.'

Walking with him in a very narrow path I remarked that if we were to meet a snake (for such creatures were often seen there), we should probably both jump. '*Jump!*' he exclaimed, with a grimace of comic terror. 'Better than that. If I were to meet a snake in this path I should instantly solve the problem of aerial navigation.'

So forceful was his utterance at this moment, so alert his look, and so emphatic his gestures that the effect was irresistible. He stood poised on tip-toe, arms spread, as if ready to start. I could almost see him winging his way through space.

He enjoyed a figure of speech drawn from the flight of birds and once entertained the dinner-table by likening himself to a migratory duck, honking as he went, flapping his wings, and 'beating the air with my webb-ed feet.' He elaborated the conceit with a wealth of

detail. It may not have been good natural history but it was immense fun.

The witty turn he gave many an idea was due merely to his expressing it with verbal neatness and throwing it into high relief by spirited exaggeration. Here is an illustration. A fugitive from New England justice, after hiding for two or three years in the Northwest, was captured and brought back for trial. He is said to have told the officer that the happiest moment of his life was when he again caught sight of the dome of the State House. 'Certainly,' said Miller, when he heard the anecdote; 'the true Bostonian! Better to be in jail in Charlestown than free on the Dakota border.'

He was never happier than on those not rare occasions when he was making jests about oneself to oneself. I remember showing him a ticket issued for a course of my lectures in a little Pennsylvania town. On the back of the ticket the local druggist had advertised his wares, laying marked emphasis on the soda-

fountain. Having examined the bit of pasteboard carefully, first on the one side and then on the other, Miller returned it with the remark 'Two kinds of fizz.'

He thought me inclined at times to be overcritical of individual members of our circle. (It is perhaps superfluous to point out that he was in this particular wholly mistaken.) At a breakfast-party at the Glen I had voiced my feeling in terms not too strong, but certainly stronger than he himself would have used. There followed a brief silence while he loaded his gun to deliver this shot: 'Leon enjoys only one thing more than damning his acquaintance, and that is, damning his friends.'

Yet he was himself an adept in the art of chastising those he loved, and he frequently exercised his art. Once when he had been tremendously emphatic over the conduct of a common friend, feeling himself aggrieved thereby, Mrs. Vincent genially remonstrated with, 'But, Jahu, our hearts are loyal.'

'Yes,' he retorted with great energy, 'but our *intellects* are free.'

I brought him the important news that one of his professional coadjutors had declared publicly that for his part he stood in no fear whatever of the Day of Judgment. 'He says that out of pure bravado,' explained Miller. 'But also he is of a most sanguine temperament; he hopes that in the scramble of the resurrection morning *he* can get away.'

When told that this same brother of the platform, who was on the eve of sailing for Europe, would share a stateroom with the proprietor of the Eden Musée, Miller said, chuckling, 'An exhibitor of curiosities and the thing itself!'

Speaking of an extraordinary grouping of books that had met his eye, Miller observed, 'The next time I visit the gentleman's library I shall expect to find *In a Club Corner* classified under calisthenics.' The last part of the above sentence is, by the way, a good example of our friend's use of assonance and alliteration.

The question came up as to whether a certain professor, a well-read man with a fairly good voice and no pretensions to beauty, would make a better appearance on the platform with, or without, his eye-glasses. Miller promptly voted for his retaining them, on the ground that 'They make an important feature of the scholastic face-scape.' But it was finally decided by this irreverent self-appointed committee that if the professor were to ask them what he had better do, they would recommend as delicately as possible his speaking from behind a screen.

Seeing an actor walking arm in arm with a minister, Miller characterized the situation (to another actor) with the phrase, 'Apotheosis of the stage — downfall of the clergy.'

The advertising cards in street-cars and elsewhere often led to his making a droll remark, one of the sort that pleases for the moment and is expected to be, and generally is, forgotten the next moment. 'A cannibal would like that,'

he said, indicating the picture of a very plump, red-cheeked little girl, supposed to have been fattened on a particular brand of soup, and beneath the picture the legend, 'Add a little hot water and serve.' And again, when passing a clothing-store his eye caught the words 'Lazarus, Spring Suits,' Miller remarked with a smile, 'Lazarus is properly celebrating his resurrection.'

Having undertaken, four or five years ago, to write a brief sketch of him for a paper edited by his friend Paul Pearson, a paper devoted to the interests of the lecture-platform, I asked Miller if he would stand by what I said. 'Yes,' he replied cheerfully, 'or fall.'

Very little of this sort of thing, which made ordinary intercourse with him so entertaining, is to be found in his letters. There were occasions, however, which moved him to be pointed, such as the following: —

For the enlightenment of his middle age, as a novelist phrases it, Dewitt Miller numbered

among the rather large circle of his intimates a few who aspired to authorship. He was kept quite busy disciplining them from time to time. That his enemy had published a book, or any number of books, concerned Miller not in the least. But when his friend published one he felt the opportunity to be glorious. It was certainly glorious for him. He had 'laughter for a month,' and a good jest, not indeed forever, but quite long enough. He wrote one literary aspirant who had recently come out in print, urging him to bring suit without delay against a certain journal noted for the pungency of its criticisms; there had indeed been no formal review, nor was likely to be, but the author had a strong case for all that. The new volume was announced under the heading, 'Books of the Weak.'

The saying is not new, but the variations he contrived to play on the idea were, and their number past counting. He salved the wounds he made by freely buying the books, and by

speaking well of them behind the author's back. And when he could not speak well he might be trusted so to becloud his real opinion with large words and syntactical involutions that it was as good as a compliment, or even better. All of which he did from sheer kindness of heart.

His joy knew no bounds when these presentation copies turned up again, this time for sale. He gave a copy of a harmless essay written by one of his friends to a certain lady-novelist, having written therein an elaborate inscription according to his wont. Some weeks later he found it in a second-hand book-shop and promptly bought it. The book was placed among his treasures and decorated with a second inscription of which one striking phrase is, 'Stale bread returning.'

Since it was his fate to have friends who wrote books, Miller was blessed in their disinclination, or their inability, to write much. No one of them has ever achieved a work in several

volumes. An anecdote was told in his presence of a voluminous man of letters who had sent an entire set of his works to a business acquaintance, a stationer, and had not heard from them yet, though many months had passed. Miller thought it not difficult to divine the use to which the books had been put. 'Nevertheless,' he said, 'the recipient was bound to make an acknowledgment in one form or another. How would this do? "Dear Sir: We regret that the superintendent at the paper-mill should have so overlooked his obligation. We distinctly advised him to acknowledge the waste you sent."'

The listeners all agreed that the letter would 'do,' and such of them as were authors privately rejoiced that they had never published sets of books, only single volumes, and those at long intervals.

Miller's fondness for quip was apparent from many of his inscriptions in books. Here is a characteristic example of his skill in

mingling praise and blame. A gentleman, noted among his associates for an extreme reluctance to take pen in hand, received from Miller one Christmas a copy of FitzGerald's *Letters*, in which was written, 'To H——, these models of a form of literature at which his own presumptive expertness is shamefully defeated by a total lack of inclination.'

The following sportive inscription was written in a pocket-speller which he had bought to meet the peculiar need of three of us, himself and two other notorious orthographical sinners. 'For the use of F. B. W., who has genius but who can't spell; and of L. H. V., who certainly has talent and possibly genius, but who can't spell, and of J. D. M., who has neither talent nor genius, but who can spell better than either of the above — and yet can't spell.'

For a last illustration — this time of his more boisterous style — we may take what he wrote in a copy of the first edition of *Leaves of*

Grass. 'To H——, this book, which if occasionally erotic, is never neurotic, nor tommy-rotic.' Differ as we may about the soundness of the critical dictum we can hardly dispute the liveliness of its phrasing.

X

The following anecdotes illustrative of our friend's odd ways, and of his many original and charming traits, are set down as they have occurred to the writer, that is to say, pretty much at random.

Miller was averse to shaking hands, and he also disliked the common forms of salutation and leave-taking, holding them to be both awkward and meaningless. For complete vapidity he thought nothing could match the phrase, 'Well, good-bye, see you later.' A man might better bolt and say nothing than sink so low as to say that.

For his part he often bolted; you knew that he was going and half an hour afterward you were aware that he was gone. He could not be said to steal away 'like the Arabs,' — he was too bulky for that, and carried too much luggage, — but he admired that unconventional

way of getting rid of oneself and to some extent practised it.

Arriving after a period of months at a house where he was eagerly expected he would greet his host with 'I was amused at this, I *was* amused at this,' — followed by a gurgle of laughter and the account of some absurd incident that he had witnessed in the street, or that had befallen him on the train.

Another time the greeting might possibly take this form: 'Just met old Jabez Smith as I was leaving the station. Haven't seen him in thirty years. Absolutely unchanged, ab-solutely. Same fringe of long white hair at the base of his skull — hair so white and so fine that it must take at least ten of his hairs to make a unit. . . . Jabez Smith! *You* never heard of him, of course, but if I'm not greatly mistaken Jabez Smith married Philander Dolittle's wife's niece. He was attorney-general under' — And so on, and so forth, save that the names would be those of real characters,

people of importance in their day, the genealogical affiliations correctly traced, and the illustrative anecdotes told in a highly entertaining manner.

A guest who announces himself in this unusual style saves his host much trouble. The business of social life begins at once. No time is wasted by the pair in asking about the state of each other's health, or in bewailing the decline of the lecture-platform.

When Miller arrived at any house he always came bearing gifts. He was benevolent uncle-at-large to a vast circle of acquaintance. These free-will offerings had to be paid for out of the proceeds of his work, and he never mastered the simple truth that, his income remaining about the same from year to year, the more he gave the less he would have.

His relation to money was peculiar. He seemed to feel that he had no right to annoy a dollar by impeding its natural tendency to circulate. Money bounded off him, so to say.

Rigid moralists would certainly have denominated him 'spendthrift.' He was not quite that. The spendthrift, I take it, is the man who wastes his money on private and questionable pleasures, who drinks it up, or gambles it away, or devotes it to making a vain show. One third of Dewitt Miller's money was applied to no baser purpose than the giving of pleasure to his friends. With the remaining two thirds he bought a few clothes, many books, and no end of railway tickets.

A lady who knew him well and understood him thoroughly reminds me that in his giving the cost of the gift counted in no particular; it was all one to him whether he had paid fifteen dollars or fifteen cents for that which he now relinquished to another's keeping. Here is an illustration of his princely generosity, and incidentally of the way in which his money went. He was showing me the Sidney Lee reprint of the First Folio of Shakespeare's Plays, to which he had been an original subscriber,

demanding that I admire it properly; he would accept in behalf of the splendid volume no luke-warm tribute from a man who read, and professed to admire, Shakespeare. 'A nice book,' he said, patting the cover, 'a very nice book.'

The next day he astonished me by saying, 'Do you care for that Sidney Lee? If you do I'll give it to you. *I* don't care in the least for it.'

Having often remonstrated with him about his incurable habit of playing tricks with his library by giving away the only copy he owned of this or that book, I remonstrated once more. He made no reply, but it was quite clear from his manner that he had determined to part with the folio. He was a frequent victim of such obsessions, and costly they were to him, and highly profitable to others.

'But I know how it will result,' I said, concluding my lecture; 'if I don't take the book you will give it to some one else.'

'Possibly so.'

'In the circumstances I think it best to take it.' And I did.

With a cackle of joy over the feebleness of my opposition he got the book down and wrote on the fly-leaf a note to the effect that it was given me in commemoration of my fiftieth birthday, which, happily, had not then arrived.

This should be the end of the story, and is not. He bethought himself of his friend at 'The Orchard,' to whom he was under obligations a thousand-fold greater than to me, and into whose keeping if anyone's a copy of the Shakespeare should go. He lost no time in putting himself right with himself in that quarter. Lastly, he repented in secret of having said that he did not care for the book for his own library. So he must needs buy a third copy, otherwise he might not have felt quite comfortable. Three copies at fifty dollars a copy! Small wonder that his dollars lingered with him for such brief periods of time.

Miller had no knowledge of music, and little or none of painting and sculpture. A popular tune, and that not always of the baser sort, often caught his fancy, and he might be heard humming a bar or two as he worked among his books. That the melodies of Arthur Sullivan were not as those of the mob of comic-opera composers he well understood, and he endorsed a friend's description of them as 'witty.'

But even the best of music gave him no acute pain. He never wished, with Doctor Johnson, that a difficult piano-piece had been so difficult as to be impossible. When his friend J. P. Lawrence played some grandiose work by Schumann or Moszkowski he always listened with an air of interest and often made an apposite comment. He relished Lawrence's phrase descriptive of the art of an able but athletic pianist: 'He plays the polonaises of Chopin as if he were killing a steer. How he does lambaste them!'

He never spoke of paintings other than por-

traits, and these he knew best through translations into black and white, the photographs and engravings. He was devoted to Tenniel, and thought all efforts to make new illustrations for *Alice in Wonderland* should be discouraged. The striking symbolical drawings which E. J. Sullivan did for an edition of *Sartor Resartus* greatly appealed to him. When he would be merry he turned over the pages of Lewis Carroll's *Rhyme? or Reason?* to enjoy for the twentieth time the unspeakable drollness of A. B. Frost's ghost pictures. He was also pleased with the saintly expressions worn by the little beasts who figure in *The Rubáiyát of a Persian Kitten* by Oliver Herford. Of the twenty drawings in Max Beerbohm's *The Poets' Corner* (that singular mixture of the extremely good and the extraordinarily bad), he preferred the one in which little Miss Mary Augusta asks her uncle, Matthew Arnold, why it is that he will not be 'always wholly serious.'

Political caricature, both English and American, he thoroughly enjoyed, and the artist had no need to be celebrated who should win his praise; he was quick to find out the merit that may easily be detected in the work of quite obscure men.

Miller was a mighty reader of the newspapers, especially devoted to the New York 'Tribune,' the 'Sun,' the 'Evening Post,' the Boston 'Transcript,' and the Springfield 'Republican.' He was never without all five, if they could be had, and he was familiar with almost every other journal of note in the larger cities of the East and the Middle West. Regularly as the first of the year approached he placed with an agent his subscription for the London (weekly) 'Times,' the 'Athenæum' and the 'Spectator,' the (English) 'Bookman,' 'Punch,' the New York 'Nation,' the 'Outlook,' the 'Christian Advocate,' and the San Francisco 'Argonaut.' To this list should be added three or four country newspapers which

he took 'for old sake's sake.' Even then it may be doubted whether the list is quite complete. One does not exaggerate in saying that throughout this mass of printed paper no paragraph that he was directly or remotely interested in escaped his eye.

He generally read scissors in hand, and would clip and clip like an exchange editor. Many of the clippings were kept for his own scrap-books, the others were enclosed in stamped envelopes and addressed to the large number of people throughout the country with whom he aimed to keep in touch. If you were interested in Ruskin, or Disraeli, or the Parsees, or shrimps, or Salem Gibraltars, or the origin of the term 'sea-puss,' he remembered that you were, remembered it for years; and everything that came his way relating to these topics, went your way by the earliest post. One gentleman, supposed to be in need of humorous paragraphs and samples of native American wit, found them coming to him by the dozens and for

months on end. When finally they ceased to arrive, the gentleman remarked that 'Miller must be suffering from an attack of clipper's cramp.'

For letters Miller often substituted press-clippings or longer articles cut from magazines. When once you had learned to interpret the signs the mode of communication did very well. You knew from the odd left-handed writing who was your correspondent. The postmark showed that he was in Vicksburg, or Winnipeg, or Carson City, and that he had thought of you in your dreary place of exile in New York or Washington. That he had thought to some purpose you knew from the enclosure, which related to a point you had discussed with him or a topic you were perennially interested in. That is all there was of it, but considering the multitude of the sendings and the care shown in allotting each his proper scrap of print, can one say that it was a little thing to do? We sometimes grew aweary of correspondence by

scissors and longed for letters. Would that we had the clippings now!

Our friend could write an excellent letter, — though he was neither a FitzGerald nor a Lowell, — but he did not always take the time to be expansive and chatty. Hundreds of his letters were no more than telegrams sent by post, highly condensed and the words docked as much as possible, 'sh' meaning shall or should, 'wh' standing for who, which, what and when, and 'th' made to do duty for this, these, that, those, they, then, the definite article and two or three more words. Nevertheless, Miller always played fairly in the game of letter-writing. When his correspondents took pains he took pains, and on that score they were generally in his debt.

No other man got quite so much satisfaction as he out of the contents of his post-bag. Anyone who has been much with him will remember the gusto with which he would say, 'Nice long letter from Colonel Higginson this

morning,' or it might be from Professor Norton, or Mrs. Howe, from any one, in short, of the rather numerous body of people whom he contrived to interest in him chiefly by means of his sincere, helpful, and intelligent interest in their work and themselves. How he first learned that Thomas Hughes had a hankering for examples of all the pirated American editions of *Tom Brown's School-Days* cannot now be told, but the Englishman had reason to be glad that Miller did learn the fact. In some such way as this were many of these epistolary relations established. One of the last letters that came to him across the water was from a member of the Hope family to whom he had written with the idea of clearing up an obscure point about Thomas Hope and 'Deepdene.' No great light was, or could be, thrown on the obscure point, but the letter itself, a model of courtliness and good epistolary English, delighted the recipient.

In his dealings with London booksellers

Miller enjoyed no feature more than the correspondence. When their letters arrived, so punctilious in tone, worded with exceeding care, and written always with pen and ink in a clerkly hand, he would read them aloud to an accompaniment of 'ventral laughs' and contrast this elegant way of doing business with the American letter-received-and-contents-noted style.

One last trait apropos of letters and letter-writing. Miller rather freely shared the contents of his post-bag with friends and even acquaintances. For a man of peculiar fineness and delicacy, who could be, if the need were, as close-mouthed as the Sphinx, he has been known to display a childlike want of reserve in the matter of letters. He was always a good deal of a boy, and this is how one sometimes found it out. No harm came of his frankness that one can recall, but many a laughable complication.

XI

He was mindful of birthdays and other anniversaries both great and small. You might think that for once he had forgotten, but no; before nightfall the telegram which had failed you at breakfast-time made its appearance. It usually came out of the West, from Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Oklahoma, or Texas. The phrasing was always ingenious, and if sometimes a little stilted was the more characteristic on that account. Miller could be very felicitous in the compass of ten words.

As a matter of course he did not carry all these dates in his head. He had a couple of birthday-books, and these little volumes with their fatally exact entries were always within reach. Trusting ladies, who in youth had imparted to him the secret of their natal day and year, sometimes thought they had reason to deplore having done so when fifteen or eighteen

anniversaries had rolled by. But Miller was never known to make an ungenerous use of his knowledge.

At Christmas time there was a great outpouring of gifts, books for the most part, and subscriptions to certain magazines and weeklies, the 'Century,' 'Scribner's,' 'Life,' and two or three journals of a civilized and civilizing character. He had the odd habit of anticipating dates. You got your Christmas offering some months before it was due. There was more of reason in the practice than at first sight appears. The holiday season often found him in remote parts of the country where large book-shops were not, and he liked a great and varied stock from which to choose.

There was also a measure of harmless eccentricity in the practice. It is unusual to bestow gifts in this manner, and our open-handed friend preferred the unusual way of doing things. There lies before me as I write the first of the sixteen volumes of Horace Walpole's

Letters, in the superb and costly Clarendon Press edition, with an inscription in Miller's rather curious hand. The set of books was given to two of us, in honor of what one of the two regards as the most fortunate event of his life. The volumes came into our possession eighteen months since, and four years have yet to elapse before the arrival of the particular anniversary which the gift is intended to mark.

Miller parted with his small possessions so readily that it was unsafe to comment on anything he had that struck your eye; you might be compelled to take it away with you. His trick of purchasing the articles he liked in duplicate (if not by the dozen) made it convenient for him to give; nothing could have made it easier. He had a taste for folding-scissors of a particular make, and always kept a supply of them on hand for the benefit of acquaintances who could appreciate the attention. Every now and then one meets a member of the tribe of vagrant lecturers whom Miller has distinguished

by bestowing on him a pair of folding-scissors. There are so many of us that we might form an association of quite respectable size and, we trust, of not a little collective ability.

Other animals besides those of the human race were the objects of Miller's benevolence. He delighted in parrots, squirrels, cats, and dogs, and had a profound respect for a horse. I well remember his satisfaction when the high-bred Angora cat that dwelt at the Glen jumped on his knee for the first time of its own accord; he had not looked for so great an honor. His face beamed as he stroked the little creature's head with his ample hand. They made a comical pair of comrades, Miller being so very large and the cat so exceedingly small.

Two or three of his cat-friends always received at Christmas time postal money-orders (made out in the name of their respective masters), to the end that they might properly celebrate the day with extra portions of cream or chunks of liver. On the occasion of his last

visit to Boston he insisted on leaving fifty cents to buy holiday meats for the cat that guards the Old South book-shop. He became interested in the account of a superb Angora of marked personality that two of his friends had met at a tea-room in Cambridge, England. 'William' was the animal's name. Miller proposed writing a letter as from Leary's cat in Philadelphia to 'William of Cambridge.' I believe he never carried out the project; his friends were not perfectly sure that William's owners would see the humor of the thing.

He usually spoke to the dogs he met in his walks, whether he knew them or not. His common form of salutation was, '*How* do you do, sir? *How* do you do?' always with an emphasizing and prolonging of the first word. And the animals never failed to show how they did, in so far as they could express their thoughts by eye and tail. With the various dogs that reigned at 'The Orchard,' or governed divers dog dukedoms at Forest Glen — Dan the Saint Bernard,

Teufel the alert terrier, Taffy the Pomeranian of impenetrable coat, the gentle Balribbie, Jeames Pitbladdo the Super-demonstrative, and the laughable Raggetty with one lop ear —he was on terms of intimacy.

Of the parrot belonging to his sister, as well as of other parrots, he had always a variety of stories to tell. He aspired to become almoner to the squirrels that frisked about the Library, and to this end provided boxes of nuts for their comfort, which the small boys of the neighborhood promptly emptied. 'If I catch the little rascals at it,' said Miller, almost red in the face, 'I'll dust their jackets for them.' The truth is that he would have done nothing of the sort; at the worst he would have exhorted them, in terms they could not possibly have understood.

He took such keen delight in a multitude of homely and familiar objects and activities that one never thinks of him as requiring what is called amusement or diversion. Time never

hung heavy on his hands, and in his calendar a dull day would have been a phenomenon. There was one sophisticated form of entertainment, however, in which he indulged freely in his young manhood. Miller played neither chess nor whist, nor yet billiards, but he liked a good dramatic performance. From chance remarks of his I take him to have been an ardent admirer of Edwin Booth, and quite incapable of losing any opportunity to hear the great tragedian. For Joseph Jefferson and Mrs. John Drew he had immense admiration. Mrs. Gilbert and James Lewis were among his favorites, and in Richard Mansfield's art he took the keenest interest. Among living players of marked gifts there were few with whose work he had not some acquaintance. Were I to hazard a guess as to the sort of comedy he most enjoyed I should say pieces like 'Lord Chumley' and 'Trelawny of the Wells.' Also 'The Professor's Love Story' and 'The Middleman.' But he had a catholic taste and did not shrink

from the most harrowing of dramas provided the art was good.

At one time in his life he enjoyed whiling away an hour at a vaudeville show. The speech of a clever black-faced monologist always diverted him, and he maintained that real genius was often displayed in the composition and delivery of these pieces. He preferred to this a real sleight-of-hand performance, as showing to what a pitch of perfection the human muscles could be trained. Feats of combined strength and agility, in the doing of which the performers seemed to defy and set aside the laws of physics, always attracted him.

For the musical part of the performance he did not greatly care, though he often told how he heard perhaps the first public rendition of a song describing the adventures of an Irishman who went to the bottom of the sea in his Sunday clothes and was believed to have got exceedingly wet, and how he (Miller) prophesied at the time an enormous popularity for the song.

Whenever he went to these places of miscellaneous amusement Miller fortified himself against boredom by taking along two or three journals or weeklies; he well knew what inanities might face him from behind the foot-lights. Once as he sat in the front row, his eyes bent on a copy of the 'Nation' that lay on his knee, a comedian of the dull but assertive type, using a low but perfectly distinct tone of voice, interpolated in his speech the words, 'Oh, come, put up your newspaper and listen.'

Without lifting his head Miller responded, in a tone quite as low and quite as distinct, 'When anything is uttered on the stage that seems to merit my attention I shall be happy to do so.'

Being asked by the friend to whom he told the incident whether the audience laughed, Miller replied, 'I doubt whether any one heard me, but I observed that members of the orchestra were diverted.'

The anecdote suggests a number of others

for which room cannot possibly be made. These unrelated points have been taken from a note-book crowded to the margins, and the best one can hope to do is to print such illustrations of our friend's ways as seem distinctive, and will help the reader in calling up the features he himself likes best to remember. For example, no account of Miller would be complete that failed to mention his enthusiasm on the subject of the care of the body.

Yet he was not, as might be inferred, a frequenter of gymnasiums or fencing schools or riding academies. The only systematic physical exercise I have ever known him to take was walking. He was strong on his feet and seemingly good for any number of miles. I cannot recall a time when he gave signs of being tired from walking. He would sweat prodigiously during this exercise, and if he did not exactly 'lard the lean earth' after the manner of Falstaff, he came near to doing so. Among his firm convictions was this, that his always ex-

cellent health might be largely attributed to the ease with which he perspired.

He walked with so rapid a step that it was trying work to keep up with him. When three or four were of the party he was half the time yards ahead of the others, finding a moderate pace difficult and sauntering impossible. When summoned to halt so that all might get together, he would stand and mark time, as if he positively must find an outlet for his superfluous energy.

In certain ways he gave much attention to the care of his health, had himself examined from time to time by one of his friends in the medical profession, and might be seen on rare occasions taking minute quantities of medicine — so minute that you wondered whether his system knew that anything was being done to it. 'Doctor Hatfield,' he would say (or it might be Doctor Faught), 'discovers that I have a slight tendency to something-or-other, and he is correcting it.' He was never as vague

as this, however, and rolled out scientific terminology in quite a learned manner.

On the other hand Miller may be said to have paid a minimum amount of attention to hygienic laws, for he took all sorts of liberties with himself, ate anything he pleased, often the strangest combinations of viands, and declared that the surest way to catch something was to go in constant fear of catching it. What a naïve thing he could do on occasion the following anecdote will show. While lecturing in Tennessee and Kentucky during the rainy month of February he caught a hard cold. The physician whom he consulted in Cincinnati said to him, 'Mr. Miller, you are dressed too warmly. This overcoat you are wearing is heavier than you need.' Miller at once discarded the garment, bought a much lighter overcoat, and went up among the deep snowdrifts of central and northern Michigan to fill his engagements there.

It was a novel way of curing a cold, and

proved effective in his case. He seemed to his friends the embodiment of physical health. One who knew him well for many years said, 'I expected Miller to bury us all, lament our departure in his brotherly but philosophical style, and go right on placidly collecting books until he was eighty-five or ninety.'

XII

He spent the month of May, 1911, at Forest Glen, with his friends and his books, and was in perfect health and the best of spirits. Wherever one saw him — in the private dining-room with Mr. Cassedy during the long after-dinner talks that both men enjoyed so much; at the joyful Sunday morning breakfasts with Mr. and Mrs. Partington; in numberless chats with other favorites of his among the faculty, Miss Priest, Miss Munford, and Miss Bomberger; at the many entertainments the season brings — one saw an entirely happy man. It is believed now that he had some private worries; if so, he knew how to conceal them.

His summer plans included a trip to the Pacific coast, with two lectures at Boise, Idaho, *en route*. Not being due in the West until early July he outstayed the other guests of the Glen household. True to his lifelong habit he took

the latest train that would ensure his arriving on time at the point where the first lecture was to be given. The hot and wearing journey may have told on him, seasoned traveller though he was.

After the lectures at the Boise Chautauqua he was found to be in no state to continue his journey and the California engagements were cancelled. By the advice of the physician, Doctor Smith, he removed from the hotel to Saint Luke's Hospital. Self-willed as always, he packed his suit-case with his own hands and carried it down stairs to the hotel-office. The news of his illness was wired to Forest Glen, and thence to other points. Mr. Cassedy took prompt measures to secure Miller's entire freedom from worries of a financial sort. Telegrams of sympathy poured in upon him, and a number of the friends he loved most offered to go to him at once if they could be of service. He declined gratefully their help; it was a long journey to Idaho, and he was 'doing well.'

There was certainly no lack of sympathetic care or of skillful treatment on the part of the excellent people into whose hands he had fallen.

It is worth noting as typical of Miller's thoughtfulness that he would not allow the hospital note-paper to be used when word was sent to his sister; he was particularly anxious that she should not be unduly alarmed.

All who had to do with the case believed that his recovery was only a question of time and care, and that in a few weeks he would be on his feet again. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson had planned to bring him to their bungalow at Lake Mahopac as soon as he was able to make the journey, and he looked forward with eagerness to the weeks of convalescence there. He pencilled a few notes to a number of his intimates. I have one that was written three days before he died. 'I'm getting along,' he says, 'though there be days that are very wearisome, and nights that have no mornings.'

Heart-failure was the immediate cause of his death. He literally slept himself away in the night (July 29, 1911). His physician could hardly believe it possible, when the news was telephoned him; he had convinced himself that if any patient could get well this patient could.

Our friend was buried from the little Methodist Church of Katonah, New York, on the afternoon of August 7. All the arrangements for the service and the flowers (there was a wealth of *them*) fell to the care of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. On them too devolved the most trying duty of all — making known to Mrs. Webb the news of her loss. Needless to say, it was discharged with perfect tact and delicacy. The flag on the village green was at half-mast, for Miller was known there and beloved. Friends came from distant points: Mr. Cassedy, Miss Priest, and Mr. Partington from Forest Glen, Doctor Wilbur L. Davidson and Mr. Paul Lemperly from Cleveland, the Reverend Mr.

Hershey from Rochester, the Reverend Townsend Russell and Mrs. Russell from Washington.

The service of the Episcopal Church was read by Mr. Russell, Mrs. Wilson sang, a prayer was offered by Mr. Davidson, and then, says my correspondent, came the farewell 'in 'the unaffected and tender words of Francis 'Wilson, that made the heart beat fast almost 'to breaking.'

The Committal service was read at the grave in the little cemetery of Cross River by Mr. Russell, in the presence of these friends and of Miller's sister and grand-niece, his only surviving relatives. He lies near his father and mother. The granite boulder that is to mark his grave will bear a bronze tablet with the name and dates, and a stanza from Whittier's poem, 'The Eternal Goodness,' — a poem which had often comforted him as it had comforted others in the turmoil of this life.

His death can mean nothing to that great

world which he studied with unflagging interest for so many years, but what it means to those who knew him they alone are able to understand.

3 Rogers: His Literary Reputation.

4 Rogers: His Literary Breakfasts.

5 Thomas Moore: Early Life.

6 Moore as a Drawing-Room Minstrel.

7 Moore as a Satirist.

8 Lady Blessington: Early Life.

9 Gore House and its Famous People.

10 Sydney Smith: Early Life.

11 Smith as a Parish Priest and Edinburgh Reviewer.

12 Smith as a Man of the World and Politician.

13 Bulwer as a Novelist of Society.

14 Disraeli's Early Life.

15 Disraeli's First Novel.

16 Thomas Love Peacock.

17 James and Horace Smith.

18 Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt

19 DeQuincey and Thomas Hope

COURSE ON THE MODERN ENGLISH NOVEL

1 Hardy's Romances of Wessex

2 Hardy's Later Work.

3 Gissing, a Great London Realist.

4 "New Grub Street" and "The Whirlpool."

5 Barrie's First Sketches.

6 Barrie as a Novelist.

7 Kipling and the Romance of India.

8 "The Jungle Books."

9 Zangwill and the Ghetto.

10 Quiller-Couch: The Romance of Cornwall.

11 Phillpotts: The Romance of Dartmoor.

12 Henry James: Early Work.

13 Henry James: Middle and Later Periods.

14 John Galsworthy.

15 Arnold Bennett.

16 H. G. Wells.

17 John Collis Snaith.

18 Merrick and Hutchinson.

19 Marshall and Walpole.

Press Comments on Mr. Vincent's Lectures and Writings

A witty and delightful lecture on "Thomas Hardy" was delivered by Mr. Leon H. Vincent before the Saturday Morning Club last Saturday. He dwelt principally upon Hardy's earlier works, emphasizing the fact that an author should not be judged by one book only, even if it be so unpleasantly fascinating a volume as "Jude the Obscure."

BOSTON TRANSCRIPT.

Leon H. Vincent delivered the fourth of his Grace Church course of lectures last evening. His subject was "Lowell as a Critic and Letter-writer," and it was treated, as are all of his attractive subjects, with remarkable brightness and appreciation.

SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN.

A pleasure, of a quality which the average literary capacity of contributors does not permit a magazine to furnish each and every month, is to be found in Leon H. Vincent's clever essay, "The Bibliotaph," in the February *Atlantic*. This "portrait not wholly imaginary" shows the second-hand bookshops and old restaurants of Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago, as harboring an habitué whose combination of whimsicality and ripe taste is of just the right stripe for literary portraiture. It was a delicate and difficult task to interpret by description, anecdote, and quoted epigram a figure so eccentric and delightful as that of this scholarly and genial vagabond among books, but fortunately a competent pen has undertaken it.

THE NATION (N. Y.)

It is safe to say that a large proportion of the goodly audience which assembled in Wesley Chapel last night to listen to Mr. Leon H. Vincent's lecture on "Thoreau" had but the remotest idea of the man whom Mr. Vincent had selected for the subject of his talk. If, when the lecturer had concluded, there was not a universal desire to dip into the remarkable books which Thoreau has left as a monument of his still more remarkable life, it was not Mr. Vincent's fault, for the glimpse which he gave of Thoreau's life, the quotations which were admirably selected from Thoreau's writings, and the eulogistic tribute which was paid to the simple and noble character of this much-misunderstood man, were sufficient to awaken the liveliest interest. The lecture was admirable in its felicity of expression, in its keen insight and in its accuracy of judgment, and was greatly enjoyed.

WASHINGTON POST.

Certainly thus far Mr. Leon H. Vincent is the most popular speaker of the season. He concluded his literary addresses this morning in the Hall of Philosophy, which was literally packed with an interested and attentive audience. * * * The topic was Victor Hugo, and the subject was treated in the same entertaining manner. It is the regret of every one that Mr. Vincent has finished his course of clever humorous and thoroughly instructive lectures.

BUFFALO EXPRESS
Chautauqua Correspondence.

"The Bibliotaph and Other People." By Leon H. Vincent. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

This is an entertaining book, entertaining because it is unique and clever, something like several other books we could mention, but not just like any of them. Mr. Vincent's friend, the Bibliotaph, is a gentleman worth knowing.

The literary essays, particularly the papers on Thomas Hardy and that on "Stevenson: The Vagabond and The Philosopher," display keen critical faculty and a pleasing, graceful style of expression.

BOSTON JOURNAL.

French Society and Letters.—Leon H. Vincent, in his "Brief Studies in French Society and Letters in the Seventeenth Century," is performing a genuine service for all those who would treasure that which is best in "*le grand siècle*" of French literature, and yet who do not read the language in which it is written. The dainty long 16mo. volume which appeared a year ago from the press of Houghton, Mifflin & Co. under the title of "The Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Précieuses," will be followed this spring by "The French Academy" and "Corneille." Mr. Vincent has the by no means common faculty of being able to interpret pedantic themes without pedantry, but with scholarly fidelity and fine sympathy. "The French Academy" deals most attractively and sympathetically with the brilliant period in French literature when Richelieu was its patron, and gives portraits of Chapelain, Vaugelas, Pellisson, and their brilliant fellow academicians. It presents a faithful view of the ambitions and aspirations which inspired these founders of the Academy. "Corneille" deals with the picturesque days when the drama which was the great Cardinal's chief means of recreation. Among the clever dramatists of the time Corneille was easily the master, and Mr. Vincent has given here a pleasant appreciation of his genius and his successes, not omitting some account of his difficulties—the envy of his fellow-craftsmen and the hostility of Richelieu.

NEW YORK TIMES.

On the afternoons of February 1, 2, and 3 the faculty, students, and friends of the Baltimore Woman's College crowded the chapel of First Church to hear a course of three lectures by Mr. Leon H. Vincent on Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau. It would broadly characterize these attractive lectures to say that in substance they were a happy blending of biography and criticism. The picture drawn of each was life-like and inspiring, suited to quicken young minds to a keen appreciation of their works and of literature in general. The lecturer's style was chaste and pleasing, at times racy and pungent, with flashes now and then of gentle humor, while the delivery, in the main colloquial, was easy, graceful, and peculiarly effective. It was in witness of their charm that attendance grew with the progress of the course, till at last even standing room was coveted. The lecturer may be sure of welcome on revisiting the city.

Baltimore letter in the
N. Y. CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

An audience that in numbers was complimentary to the reputation of the speaker braved the cold and greeted Mr. Vincent last evening in First Congregational Church. His subject was that much applauded and much abused Scotchman, the author of "Sartor Resartus." It was an hour of most entertaining hero worship on the part of the lecturer. In the most easy, familiar, conversational manner the speaker touched upon the life struggles, stern character, sour temperament, and unrivalled literary triumphs of Carlyle. Mr. Vincent dwelt particularly upon the lofty and inspired motives of Carlyle's thought and work—his savage devotion to truth—the tribute appreciative America paid his genius, and at some length his marital infelicities. Those who were absent missed a most delightful and instructive lecture. Mr. Vincent's lectures are artistic mosaics of wit and wisdom, humor and pathos. He has a fresh, original and vigorous way of putting his thoughts, and his English, always elegant and often eloquent, is a model of strength, simplicity and purity. His second topic is Ruskin, and will be presented Friday evening next.

OHIO STATE JOURNAL
Columbus.

Legislative Reference Service

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
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June 3, 1926.

Mr. W. L. Harden
c/o Houghton Mifflin Co.
16 East 40th Street
New York City

My dear Mr. Harden:

It was very kind of you to send me your letter of June 2d. I knew Dewitt Miller very well and at the time the biographical sketch of him by Leon H. Vincent was issued I secured two copies, one of which I have since given away. He was indeed an amusing and eccentric but at the same time very interesting and charming man and Vincent's sketch of him is one of the most charming accounts of a book-lover that I have ever read.

With thanks for your kindness, I remain

Cordially yours,

L. H. D. Meyer
Director
Legislative Reference Service

THE MILLER LIBRARY

For the late Mr. DeWitt Miller, the noted bibliophile, there was erected on the grounds an admirabley arranged library building as a fitting home for a remarkable collection of about twenty thousand books.

The collection contains, besides, many autographs, letters and mementos of celebrities, old prints, pamphlets and portraits, numerous rare and choice volumes of bibliographical and historical value; first editions, presentation copies, private publications, editions de luxe, antiques, find bindings and literary curiosities.

Under the direction of teachers, the literature classes are given access to these treasures. It is rare that any shcool has such an opportunity to create in its students a love for books, apart from their literary content, an appreciation of the beautiful and artistic in bookmaking, an interest in book lore, and a habit of fellowship with genuine literary treasures.

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